

CHAPTER FIVE: Aulen's Critique of Anselm

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CHAPTER FIVE: Aulén's Critique of Anselm

A. Introduction

In expounding the classic view of God's saving work, Gustaf Aulén delineates several categories of atonement presentation, among these what he calls the Latin type of atonement theory. One principal aim of Aulén's Christus Victor book is to distinguish clearly between this Latin atonement approach and his own classical exposition. Merely to categorize Christ's atoning work as objective or subjective without clarification and distinction results in a soteriological confusion. Aulén insistently contends that what has passed under the category of objective atonement in contrast to subjective atonement ideas is very often a confused juxtaposing of "classic" elements with a determined and clearly structured concept which he calls the Latin type of atonement. As Aulén strives to clear up this confusion by his own explanation of the classic view of atonement, he describes what he terms this Latin view. He pointedly declares at the very outset: "The result can only be a confusion of two views of the atonement which need to be clearly distinguished. I shall therefore refer to the type of view commonly called objective as the 'Latin' type, because it arose and was developed on Western, Latin soil, and to the dualistic-dramatic view as the 'classic idea' of the atonement."¹ In chapter five of the published Christus

victor, Aulén discusses the principal protagonist of the Latin type of atonement: Anselm of Canterbury.

Preparing his treatment of Anselm, Aulén traces the origins and sources of what finally emerges as Anselm's soteriology. He bluntly affirms: "It is possible to fix with precision the time of the first appearance of the Latin theory. Tertullian prepares the building materials; Cyprian begins to construct out of them a doctrine of the atonement."² These two figures represent the notions of satisfaction, merit, and the transference of earned reward to others, which constitute the foundation of the Latin doctrine proposed by Anselm.³

Hastings Rashdall's study of atonement summarizes Tertullian's influence in the development of soteriology. Rashdall observes that in Tertullian, "the theology of Irenaeus is latinized - that is to say coarsened and legalized."⁴ He underlines the characteristic legalism of Tertullian's approach: "In Tertullian not merely the scheme of the atonement but all the relations between God and man put on the character of legal transactions. His pages bristle with phrases like 'debt,' 'satisfaction,' 'guilt,' 'merit,' 'compensation'."⁵ Likewise, Rashdall affirms that in Tertullian one discerns the substitution of legal for moral conceptions and "the degradation" of repentance into "penance," "a type of 'satisfaction' scheme to 'placate' God and to 'compensate' for post-baptismal sins by actions of pious austerity."⁶

Along this same line, Rashdall explores the influence of Cyprian's ideas which made salvation "more than ever dependent upon the machinery of a single ecclesiastical organization" through a "system of ecclesiastical discipline as a means of overcoming the harsh severity of those who would allow no forgiveness of grave post-baptismal sin".⁷

Rashdall states:

There can be no doubt, however, of the unfortunate effect which the penitential system exercised upon Western ideas about sin and salvation. Cyprian is full of the idea that post-baptismal sin must be "satisfied for," that God must be "placated" by prayers and tears, by fasting, by self-inflicted sufferings and almsgiving; and there emerges in his writings - distinctly, though faintly - the notion that saints and confessors are capable of earning more "merit" than is required for their own salvation, and that this merit can be transferred by the Church to the credit of others.

Cyprian's position added to Tertullian's legalism serves to characterize the basic structure employed by Anselm in his theological exposition of man's salvation in Christ.

For Gustaf Aulén this legalistic framework poses a significant obstacle in regard to soteriological presentation; and Aulén recognizes that "we have then here the whole essence of the Latin idea of the atonement."⁹ And even though Aulén concedes that the nascent and growing development of this Latin atonement idea has stood side by side with varying expressions of the classic view, nevertheless, a fundamental defect lies in the point that "the whole idea is essentially legalistic."¹⁰ This

observation forms a constant refrain in Aulén's critical evaluation of the Latin soteriology.

F.W. Dillistone in The Christian Understanding of Atonement traces the genetic development of the satisfaction notion and its facile absorption into the question of man's salvation. He reflects that Tertullian adopts a keyword from the Roman law system, "a word bearing the fundamental idea that wherever the harmonious ordered working of the whole society has been disturbed by a failure to comply with its essential laws (either by some excess or by some deficiency) an adequate reparation must be offered not only in the sense of doing now what was originally commanded but also of offering now an extra which can be accepted as sufficient payment for the delinquency."¹¹ Because of the Church's concern for post-baptismal sin, this way of satisfaction had opened up a means of salvation, and it was only natural that this notion would be linked to the source of salvation itself, Christ's redemptive activity.

Dillistone reflects:

...it is in this sympathetic entrance into the experience of the penitents, in this taking the sins of others on itself, that he identifies the Church with Christ....The formula was bound to come, and for better or worse it did come, that Christ by his death made satisfaction for sins.¹²

Dillistone's study acknowledges the importance of this satisfaction concept, but he clearly indicates its inherent defect; "Under careful safeguards it has proved useful to indicate the seriousness of sin as a disturbance of the just order of God for which reparation must be made. But on

balance its use has probably been more harmful than beneficial in that it has represented the relations between God and man too strictly in legalistic and even quantitative terms."¹³ Anselm's soteriological presentation fully employs this satisfaction structure, while Aulén seeks to illustrate its essential deficiency.

Aulén's critique likewise considers the question of how humanity's salvation is achieved in Christ. Aulén insists that the classic view he espouses expresses a continuity in God's activity, while the Latin type manifests a discontinuity due to the fact that man appears to occupy the crucial position in the redeeming action. He asserts that "in speaking of Christ's work, the emphasis is all laid on that which is done by Christ as man in relation to God."¹⁴ One readily discerns that this pivotal point in Aulén's critique stems directly from the satisfaction scheme employed by Anselm. In this pattern, the very notion that "a man must be found to make the needed satisfaction to God" appears to place the salvation process on a path that compromises God's role.

For Gustaf Aulén's classic view, this legalistic structure and the particular emphasis on mankind's role render the Latin type of atonement unacceptable. On the other hand, Aulén remains aware of Anselm's noteworthy theological contribution in the area of soteriology. It is principally in the historic treatise, Cur Deus Homo, that Anselm proposes his soteriological ideas; and in this work

the similarities and differences with Aulén's classic, dramatic view of atonement emerge.

B. Anselm and the Cur Deus Homo

As Aulén's soteriological exposition focuses attention on Irenaeus, Anselm, and Luther, one readily recognizes that each of these figures mirrors his respective milieu. For Anselm, the living context is the world of the Middle Ages. What is known of Anselm directly comes mainly from a prejudiced observer, his friend, traveling companion and secretary, Eadmer (c. 1060 - c. 1128). Eadmer's two great works, the Historia Novorum in Anglia and his Vita Anselmi are the chief sources of the events which mark Anselm historically.¹⁵ Eadmer's historical accounts narrate much of Anselm's career and accomplishments especially in regard to his thinking as formulated in Anselm's principal religious works.¹⁶ Of these theological treatises, the Cur Deus Homo stands at the very heart of the soteriological debate. This historic book carries further importance as John McIntyre reflects in his analysis of Anselm: "...the Cur Deus Homo emerges as the greatest theological work of St. Anselm - greatest not simply because, in relation to the theory of the atonement, he achieves his most original work, but even more because in it he gives though in less systematic form than in the other works, his most mature account of the nature of God."¹⁷ McIntyre's comments enable

one to understand that for Aulén's soteriological exposition, both the redemptive presentation and its correlation with a given image of God are topics of special interest and importance. This is especially the case in Aulén's Das christliche Gottesbild and The Drama and the Symbols.

In presenting a background for the Cur Deus Homo, R.W. Southern expresses the prominence of Anselm's work: "Standing at the beginning of the most creative period of the Middle Ages, it has an unrivaled combination of sustained argument, intense moral force, and originality in general conception and in detail."¹⁸ Southern likewise enumerates three noteworthy influences on its purpose and composition: 1) Anselm's motivation to respond to Roscelin of Compiègne in regard to the Incarnation; 2) the theological speculation of the school of Laon; 3) Gilbert Crispin's dispute with the Jews.¹⁹

Roscelin had espoused a theological conception which compromised the Trinity so that the result was either three Gods, or all three as incarnate in Christ. Anxious to avoid identification with Roscelin's theory, Anselm responded in the Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi. The Cur Deus Homo completes what Anselm wishes to say on this question:

In the first of these works Anselm attempted to demonstrate against Roscelin, that if the Incarnation was a fact, it must have involved the Incarnation of only one Person in the Trinity. But the question still remained: was the Incarnation a fact or, as the enemies of Christianity declared, a figment of the imagination? In the Cur Deus Homo Anselm

undertook to demonstrate that the Incarnation was not a figment but ^a fact; and not just a fact but a necessary fact.²⁰

In the Cur Deus Homo not only is Anselm completing his view of the Incarnation, but he is handling the question from the stance of a necessary historical fact.

Discussing Anselm, R.W. Southern relates the cathedral school of Laon to two major points: the format of the dialogue with Boso in the Cur Deus Homo; and the negation of the traditionally-held rights of the devil over man.²¹ This latter feature holds significance in dealing with Aulén's thoughts regarding the devil's rights in the classic view. Southern considers Anselm's opinion concerning the devil's rights:

There is only one chapter of the Cur Deus Homo in which Anselm states a traditional view in order to demolish it. This is the chapter dealing with the rights of the devil (I, 7), and it is one of the most powerful pieces of argument in the whole work. It is also one of the most revolutionary.²² The form of the argument is especially masterly.

Anselm's refutation of the devil's rights forms a major innovation in his soteriological exposition.

As regards Southern's observations concerning Gilbert Crispin and the Jews, they are important in understanding those aspects of the Cur Deus Homo which treat of the problem of the "how" of man's redemption in relation to the dignity of God. The unbeliever of the Cur Deus Homo, unlike that of the Proslogion, is not imaginary; "he was to be seen everywhere in the Jews already familiar in Normandy, and rapidly becoming familiar in England also."²³ Their

criticism concerned the dignity of God; and this question posed a serious problem for Anselm. In brief, Anselm encounters a severe difficulty: "How could the Incarnation with all its indignity of human contact, insult, injury and shameful death be reconciled with the supreme dignity and stability of God?"²⁴ One of two areas of proof would suffice to respond to this problem - a proof from the Old Testament or a "logical proof from which there could be no appeal."²⁵ The Cur Deus Homo attempts the latter for both believer and unbeliever.

These three observations of Southern's investigation of Anselm bear directly on an analysis of Anselm's soteriological presentation: the Incarnation as necessary historical fact; the denial of the devil's rights; and an attempt to logically ground an atonement theory upholding the dignity of God. Aulén's critique of Anselm respects these background elements of the Cur Deus Homo.

C. Anselm's Basic Problem

Criticizing the Latin type of atonement theory, Gustaf Aulén at first concedes a major point: Anselm's presentation does not present a change of attitude on the part of a wrathful and angry God. Aulén recognizes this as a misrepresentation of what Anselm is trying to convey. In Christus Victor Aulén clearly underlines this point: "Thus it has constantly been said, especially in popular

expositions, that Anselm taught that a direct change in God's attitude was effected by Christ's satisfaction; but this is not what Anselm said."²⁶ Aulén himself is aware of this fact and desires to evaluate Anselm accurately. An important soteriological affirmation emerges here - neither in the Anselmian presentation nor in the classic view does one witness a change in God. There is a singular, purposive unity in God the creator redeeming his own creation through Christ. Aulén acknowledges the close unity of creation and atonement in Anselm's work.²⁷ On the other hand, Aulén observes two areas where he finds Anselm's Latin atonement deficient and which tend to obscure the unity of God's creative purpose and redemption: its legalistic structure and the particular presentation of what Christ does as man in relation to God.²⁸ To appreciate Aulén's criticism, one must understand what Anselm aims to achieve in the Cur Deus Homo.

In the Preface to the Cur Deus Homo, Anselm indicates that the two parts of the work will address the objections put forth by unbelievers concerning salvation and the fact that creation could not be fulfilled unless God became man.²⁹ At the outset, Anselm declares his intention to argue on the basis of reason as if nothing had ever been known of Christ.³⁰ This remoto Christo methodology which Anselm purports to follow depends upon a number of suppositions that need to be accepted.³¹ Similarly,

Anselm's methodology does not overlook the necessary relationship between understanding and the believer. The Cur Deus Homo embodies Anselm's fides quaerens intellectum. Victor Roberts summarizes Anselm's soteriological process:

For reading him it is essential that one grasp the meaning of his terms intelligere (which occurs in his famous motto credo ut intelligam and - in a derivative form - in his title fides quaerens intellectum) and ratio. The term intelligere - in contrast to cogitare, which expresses its verbum - denotes the confrontation or contact between the mind and the reality that is known. In a more passive manner than the cogitare of pure thought, intelligere lays hold of the reality that is given, interiorizes it and makes it its own. The quest for an intellectus fidei, therefore, is an attempt to penetrate what is believed and to allow oneself to be penetrated by it.³²

Anselm's attempt at logical demonstration, whether in the Cur Deus Homo or elsewhere, discloses his concern for the believer. In a certain sense, it is fidelis qua quaerens who occupies his theological attention. And what occurs in the process to the fidelis may be what the infidelis is in need of.³³ In his dialogue with Boso which he employs as the vehicle for his discussion in the Cur Deus Homo,³⁴ Anselm claims that the believer must not neglect this attempt to understand the principal tenets of his faith.³⁵

In the first sections of his soteriological discourse, Anselm fixes attention on the acute problem that confronts him: how can it be that God redeems man by the Incarnation, suffering, and death of Jesus, if in this fashion God's omnipotence and wisdom stand as questionable? His omnipotence is questioned because he appears to be powerless to achieve this in any other way; his wisdom, because of the

fact that he chooses to do with great trouble what could be accomplished more easily. Could not this have been resolved by means of some other being, angelic or human, or merely by his willing? What necessitated salvation in this manner?³⁶ If this constitutes Anselm's "problem," what makes it so pressing? Why must Anselm and his friend turn their attention to it in their mutual dialogue? Boso details what compels their discussion:

Infidels ridiculing our simplicity charge upon us that we do injustice and dishonor to God when we affirm that he descended into the womb of a virgin, that he was born of woman, that he grew on the nourishment of milk and the food of men; and, passing over many other things which seem incompatible with deity, that he endured fatigue, hunger, thirst, stripes and crucifixion among thieves.³⁷

One then readily discerns that the problem arises as an attack on the justice and honor of God. In stating this difficult challenge to Christian belief, Boso reflects on a common factor of the understanding process: "For although they appeal to reason because they do not believe, but we, on the other hand, because we do believe; nevertheless, the thing sought is one and the same."³⁸

Anselm's first response to this challenge to God's honor and dignity is to assert how fittingly mankind is redeemed. He does this by using parallels: death came by disobedience - now life comes through obedience; sin originated in a woman - now a redeemer is born of woman; the devil had conquered from a tree - now it is fitting that from a tree he himself should be overcome.³⁹ In this sense

the redemption as accomplished not only seems fitting, but is viewed as truly beautiful.⁴⁰ But Anselm goes beyond these parallels and the propriety of God's action to a stronger and more compelling reason as to why redemption takes place: God's creative purpose must not fail.⁴¹ Anselm likewise affirms that no other being but Christ can resolve this, otherwise man would be the servant of that particular being - and not of God.⁴²

Already early in Cur Deus Homo, Anselm affirms the result of this redemptive action of the creator: "He freed us from our sins, from his own wrath, and from hell, and from the power of the devil, whom he came to vanquish for us, because we were unable to do it, and...he purchased for us the kingdom of heaven...."⁴³ By achieving his purpose, God manifests great love for mankind.⁴⁴

Progressing in the Cur Deus Homo, Anselm's posing of the problematic reaches a highpoint: Why does God do what he does with such difficulty? Could he not gain man's salvation in some other way since all things are in his power? "How is it, then, that God must come down from heaven to vanquish the devil?"⁴⁵ Anselm has finally set the scene for a consideration of two acute points for his soteriology: the rights of the devil and the notion of a necessary satisfaction for sin.

It is in these areas that the Latin type of atonement comes under the sharp criticism of Gustaf Aulén. Up until this point, Anselm's assertions concerning God's care for

his creation and the need to understand the "how" and "why" of mankind's redemption fall into place with Aulén's classic idea. The question of the devil and the satisfaction concept mark a definitive difference between these atonement views.

D. Anselm and the Devil

In Christus Victor Gustaf Aulén indicates that Anselm "repudiates the old idea of a ransom paid to the devil," and consequently, the devil figure "has no vital relation to the structure of his thought."⁴⁶ The dualism of opposing forces so necessary for Aulén's dramatic atonement is minimized by Anselm in his Cur Deus Homo. One may ask what leads Anselm to this position which John McIntyre describes: "...in a few swift strokes St. Anselm destroys a view of the control of the devil over man in his sin which had been held from the second century until the twelfth."⁴⁷ Certainly, Anselm's exposition signals a notable change in the soteriological thinking of the time.

The seventh chapter of Book One of the Cur Deus Homo treats of the devil. In a previous speech of Boso, one already observes Anselm's argument to be turning in this direction. The critical point in a continuation of Boso's words⁴⁸ is why God had to "try a contest with the devil."⁴⁹ The object of the contest was to remove man from the clutches of the devil. If the devil should put to death

that being who was not worthy of death and who was God, then the devil would justly lose his power over sinners.⁵⁰ If this were not the case, then God would be using undue and unjust force against the devil since the devil rightfully held sway over man who had freely surrendered himself to this being.⁵¹ The devil had not seized man by force or violence; man had given himself over to him.⁵² Hence, the argument states that God must deal with the devil in a just fashion. Boso does not agree at all: God has power over the devil and the devil deserves nothing but punishment for his malevolent seduction of man. Boso says:

It is true that this might well enough be said, if the devil or man belonged to any other being than God, or were in the power of any but God. But since neither the devil nor man belong to any but God, and neither can exist without the exertion of divine power, what cause ought God to try with his own creature (de suo in suo), or what should he do but punish his servant, who had seduced his fellow-servant to desert their common Lord and come over to himself...."⁵³

Boso adamantly objects to seeing justice on the devil's side, stating that "in an evil angel there can be no justice at all."⁵⁴

Boso proceeds a step further. He asserts that the devil torments man unjustly because he does not love justice but is malicious.⁵⁵ While God permits this, one should not misconstrue this state of affairs as affirming that the devil is acting justly. Justice, for Anselm as for the speaker, Boso, belongs wholly to God and not at all to the devil.

The substance of this dialogue in Anselm's treatise is basically that the devil has no rights over man; although God may permit the devil to torment man, one must not judge this to be just and right on the devil's side even though man fully deserves this treatment. In sum, justice and the devil are not compatible in Anselmian thought.

By expressing his argument, Anselm challenges the traditional view concerning the devil's rights to a ransom. Jasper Hopkins in his work, A Companion to the Study of Saint Anselm, comments on this in regard to Augustine and a fortiori to the whole Patristic tradition:

To begin with, Anselm rejects the Augustinian theory which maintains that the death of Christ served to ransom mankind from the captivity of Satan. In the De Trinitate, 13, and De Libero Arbitrio, 3, Augustine viewed Adam's yielding to Satan's solicitation as bringing the human race into Satan's power....In Cur Deus Homo, I, 7, Anselm, through Boso, asserts that there is no reason why God should not have dealt with Satan through force, for Satan had no right to punish man.⁵⁶

Anselm finds still another objection to the ransom theory, its concept of God concealing his divine power and thereby deceiving Satan into unjustly acting against God in the person of Jesus. For Anselm, this type of action is contrary to God's nature of being the Truth.⁵⁷ Anselm explicates this idea in his Meditation on Human Redemption:

Why did you, O good Lord, gracious Redeemer, mighty Savior, why did you veil such strength with such lowliness? Was it in order to deceive the devil, who by deceiving man thrust him forth from Paradise? Surely, Truth deceives no one....Surely, just as Truth deceives no one, so it does not intend that anyone deceive

himself....⁵⁸The hiddenness was unavoidable, not deliberate.

By rejecting the notion of the deception of the devil, Anselm further repudiates the soteriological views of the preceding centuries.⁵⁹

Anselm's boldness in refuting the traditional thinking was not greatly appreciated by the soteriological conservatism of his own time or by later centuries. Southern comments that "logic and experience" both supported the contrary of Anselm's position.⁶⁰ Logically, the Incarnation and atonement fall into place as a means of re-establishing the order of creation disturbed by the devil's action. Experientially, the Middle Ages reflected the power-hold of evil: "The empire of the devil in nature and supernature was a matter of daily experience: the devil's empire and the daily breaches made in it by Christ provided the framework of history."⁶¹ And yet ironically, these same two aspects of logic and experience move Anselm to a different interpretation:

Thought and instinct alike recommended the old view; and they alike persuaded Anselm to reject it. He had too uncompromising and too unitary a view of God's dominion over the whole creation to accept any view which allowed the devil, or any other rebel, a claim to justice against God. Rebellion deserved nothing but punishment; and to have seduced mankind into rebellion only increased the punishment; it did not create an empire.⁶²

Hastings Rashdall depicts Anselm's view in light of his personal disposition and capsulizes Anselm's consideration of the devil and the ransom concept:

Few men have succeeded to the same extent in combining the temper of the saint with that of the philosopher. For such a man the ransom theory was discredited, not only by its intellectual absurdity but by its irreverence. To say that man after the fall was lawfully or justly the servant of Satan instead of the servant of God, to say that God owed the devil a debt which he could not justly repudiate, seemed, on the face of it, sheer blasphemy; and Anselm absolutely denied that the devil ever had any lawful authority over man or any rights which God was bound to respect. Man had never ceased to be the servant of God. God owed the devil nothing but punishment; in so far as he was allowed any authority over men, he was a mere instrument of punishment in God's hands.⁶³

Rashdall's own basic assumption is that the Church uncritically had accepted Christ's death as salvific and expressed this largely with the theory of a ransom paid to the devil. Rashdall avows that in the Church of the West the ascendancy of this outlook was "undisputed until the twelfth century" and "can be discovered more or less explicitly in nearly every writer of whose works there are any considerable remains."⁶⁴ He indicates that Anselm plays a prominent role in "the emancipation of the Church from this hideous theory."⁶⁵

Appreciating Anselm's innovation, one might question what is the immediate effect of this alteration on his exposition of redemption. With the removal of the devil and a denial of his dominion over man, free forgiveness of sins now appears possible. However, another factor arises which both complicates and intensifies Anselm's proposal. R.W. Southern succinctly states: "But if sin were freely forgiven, the sacrifice of Christ would lose its point, and

the Jewish criticism that Christianity irrationally and unnecessarily exposed God to the pain and indignities of human life would have to be answered (if it could be answered at all) in a way quite different from that of traditional doctrine."⁶⁶ Here a critical stage in Anselm's soteriology is reached: what of the sacrifice of Christ? With a denial of the devil's rights, Anselm upholds and yet challenges the dignity of God. On the one hand, God's sovereignty stands above any rights of the devil; while, on the other side, Christ's actual, historical sacrifice does not seem to be needed for man's salvation. Anselm's pushing of the argument to this difficult angle appears deliberate in order to accentuate the full force of the soteriological solution he proposes. The wisdom-power problematic of the first chapters of the Cur Deus Homo stands out clearly.

With Anselm's elimination of the devil's rights and need for ransom, Aulén recognizes an essential defect of this soteriology - a lack of appreciation for the dualistic aspect of salvation. This devaluation of the dualistic or "antagonistic" elements in the redemption results in the following:

- a) a failure to appreciate the struggle dimension of God's saving work;
- b) an inadequate view of the power of the opposing forces - the devil and sin;
- c) a tendency to isolate the death of Christ from his Incarnation and ministry;
- d) an inadequate sense of the victory achieved in the death and resurrection - "the note of triumph

which had been typical of the classic idea, from the Apostolic Age onwards, is damped down";⁶⁷

- e) a difficulty in maintaining a constant view of God as the one who redeems - "the work of the atonement is no longer seen as directly the work of God."⁶⁸

For Gustaf Aulén's presentation of the classic idea of atonement, these defects are linked to Anselm's denigration of the dualistic outlook in the Latin atonement theory.

In Christus Victor Aulén speaks of the struggle inherent in Christ's redemptive role, but it is in his later works that he expresses himself more vividly. Writing in The Drama and the Symbols, he asserts:

What the Bible describes is a universal drama. The God to whom it bears witness is a living and active God, a God ever at work. This action of God, his "mighty deeds," we find described as action at war with opposition, at war with all that is anti-God and destructive of his creation. Action versus opposition equals drama. What we find here is an all-embracing drama, reaching from "the beginning" in the first book of the Bible, to the final act, "the end," which the last book in the Bible, the Revelation, foretells.⁶⁹

A principal quality in Aulén's The Drama and the Symbols is his desire to show the truly dramatic and "radical" nature of Christ's work and its integral relationship with various images of God. Many of Aulén's statements constitute an ongoing critique of the Latin type of atonement. Aulén insists on the struggle motif of a dualistic-antagonistic reality in regard to "the hard conditions in which the love of God has to work and suffer in our world."⁷⁰

Along the same vein of thought, a lessening or even elimination of the dualistic motif in Anselm's presentation

leads necessarily to an inherent failure to appreciate the power of the enemy. Where the religious concentration centers on the redress of relationship between God and man (which redress is certainly valid), attention is directed away from the power-hold of the opposition, the devil and sin. Aulén sees confirmation of the strength of these opposing forces in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' confrontation with the demonic. In The Drama and the Symbols he highlights I John 3:8 and Luke 11:20:

A theme that constantly recurs in the Gospels is Jesus' battle with demonic powers, for which we find different expressions: devil, Satan, Beelzebub, evil spirits. The passage in I John 3:8: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," is a telling description of one of the main themes of the Gospels. The significance that Jesus himself according to the Gospels attached to this battle against the evil spirits is shown in Luke 11:20: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."⁷¹

Aulén understands the difficulty some might feel in the devil language of the Scriptures; yet he remains convinced that these expressions serve to emphasize the power inherent in the forces hostile to God. Holding mankind in bondage, these powers must be overcome if salvation is to be accomplished. Anselm's elimination of the devil factor tends to minimize the ferocity of "the struggle that rages between the power of God and the hostile power complex."⁷² Aulén discusses this point in regard to the devil:

"The devil" is an expression for the concerted powers of evil. One has only to use the allied

words demonic and demonism for realism to break through the mythological veil. What the Bible's drastic language is trying to say about these things is simply the antagonism, the struggle that rages between the power of God and the hostile power complex, whether described in the singular or the plural. In my book Christus Victor I have analyzed the treatment of the Bible theme of struggle in theology and tried to indicate the reality which is concealed behind the Bible language about evil spirits.⁷³

Affirming that the dualistic-antagonistic element is vitally central to the message of salvation, boldly Aulén contends: "The ultimate question here is of something that lies at the root of all biblical and Christian preaching: God versus the demonic and destructive forces in existence."⁷⁴ Aulén proceeds beyond the demonic imagery to describe sin and death:

...sin is not seen in moral terms, but as a destructive force, holding mankind imprisoned, in thrall. On the same analogy death is regarded as a destructive force, an enemy holding mankind captive in a grip of iron.⁷⁵

In his general line of thought, Aulén holds that the struggle motif arising from a dualistic, antagonistic religious reality strikes at the heart of mankind's entire faith experience. "Belief in God," he asserts, "never lives without conflict."⁷⁶ And he adds: "...faith in God is always a fighting faith, never self-evident, never unproblematic."⁷⁷

In Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research Aulén follows this same pattern in discussing the dualism found in the Scriptures. He affirms that while "Jesus speaks without reservations of a power struggle," God's sovereignty and

might remain intact.⁷⁸ Keeping this clearly in mind, Aulén suggests that "antagonism" rather than "dualism" may be a more appropriate term.⁷⁹ All in all, the basic religious affirmation of a mighty struggle between God and the forces of evil determines the atmosphere wherein mankind's redemption is accomplished through Christ. The classic view of atonement gives full play to such a contest, whereas Anselm's proposal makes it increasingly difficult to maintain a realistic sense of the enemy power.

Criticizing Anselm's position, Aulén contends that by discarding the dualistic outlook, Anselm's soteriology tends to emphasize "the death [of Christ] as an isolated fact, and as in itself constituting the satisfaction."⁸⁰ On the other side, the classic view envisions the death as "the climax of a long conflict."⁸¹ Here of course, Aulén speaks of the disjunction between atonement and the Incarnation which he finds in Anselm's theory. He contends that in this theory, "Incarnation and atonement are not organically connected together" and the necessity of the Incarnation is understood only "with the help of secondary lines of thought."⁸² While Aulén's critique of the lack of this organic connection between the Incarnation and atonement focuses attention on Anselm's satisfaction scheme, nevertheless, he emphasizes that Anselm's elimination of the dualistic outlook has contributed to this.

With the notion of the devil's power diminished, the ministry of Jesus and his conflict with demonic and

distressing forces appear only secondarily related to redressing mankind's situation before God. This problem is connected directly to the question of how and in what sense Jesus' death offers satisfaction to God for mankind's sin. In this context, Aulén asserts that by lessening emphasis on the religious dualism, the tendency to fix attention on Christ's death apart from the total ministry becomes more evident. If the satisfaction scheme is constructed upon the premise that all is owed to God by creatures, and that Christ himself owes all except what he need not undergo - death,⁸³ then the redemptive quality of Jesus' activity, apart from his dying, appears increasingly difficult to maintain. The preaching and healing ministry of Jesus, integrally linked to what transpires on Golgotha in the classic idea, can be judged, at best, to be only preparatory or complementary in a satisfaction through death scheme. A struggle unto and through death stands distinctively apart from the satisfaction theory.

Aulén furthermore recognizes that once a satisfaction plan is utilized, a primary point of initiating the process must be found by turning to mankind. It is now no longer just a case of attacking the enemy forces but rather of setting these forces to the side, since attention focuses on this question: "Where can a man be found, free from sin and guilt, and able to offer himself as an acceptable sacrifice to God?"⁸⁴ With the devaluation of the dualistic

perspective, the sense of the redemptive action shifts the emphasis away from a struggle motif concerning the hostile opposition to a method of satisfying God's justice and honor.

Anselm intends to demonstrate how humanity's situation is rectified because of what has happened due to sin. His solution is satisfaction. Aulén's critique stresses that Anselm's proposal, innovative though it is, does not adequately confront the problem of mankind's sinfulness. By eliminating the devil's rights and the ransom concept, Anselm's interpretation of redemption differs essentially from that of the dramatic-dualistic type of atonement.

E. Sin as Violating God's Honor

Aulén asserts in his Christus Victor that Anselm's satisfaction scheme has produced a serious and faulty consequence for a viable soteriology - "the radical opposition of God to sin has become weakened down."⁸⁵ Aulén indicates that Anselm has reached this point through the alternative he proposes: "either a forgiveness of sins by God, which would mean that sin is not treated seriously and so would amount to a toleration of laxity, or satisfaction. No other possibility is regarded as conceivable."⁸⁶ He admits Anselm's "moral earnestness" in dealing with the question of sin.⁸⁷ Of course, Aulén's disagreement with Anselm revolves around how Anselm presents sin and the

manner in which sin is treated by means of satisfaction. The question takes on added significance since Anselm has minimized the role of the devil in the strained relationship between God and mankind resulting from sin.

How does Anselm conceive of sin? In what way does the satisfaction through Christ come to grips with this problem? The Anselmian concept of sin can be seen in this manner: all creatures must render their due to God; not to render this obligation is to dishonor God; such dishonor is sin. Anselm writes:

If man or angel always rendered to God his due, he would never sin.⁸⁸

Therefore to sin is nothing else than not to render to God his due.⁸⁹

He who does not render this honor which is due God, robs God of his own and dishonors him; and this is sin.⁹⁰

For Anselm, sin results from this refusal to render to God his due. It is around this concept that Anselm constructs the satisfaction plan into which he fits the figure of Christ. Here in the Cur Deus Homo, he clearly outlines his formulation which includes the following: a) sin as a dishonoring of God; b) the need for a restoration and rectification of this situation; and c) a greater emphasis on what has been done and who has been offended than on what was taken away and must be restored. Anselm's thinking clearly expresses these points:

He who does not render this honor which is due to God, robs God of his own and dishonors him; and this is sin. Moreover, so long as he does not restore what he has taken away, he remains in

fault; and it will not suffice merely to restore what has been taken away, but, considering the contempt offered, he ought to restore more than he took away. For as one who imperils another's safety does not enough by merely restoring his safety, without making some compensation for the anguish incurred; so he who violates another's honor does not enough by merely rendering honor again, but must, according to the extent of the injury done, make restoration in some way satisfactory to the person whom he has dishonored. We must also observe that when any one pays what he has unjustly taken away, he ought to give something which could not have been demanded of him, had he not stolen what belonged to another. So then, everyone who sins ought to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God; and this is the satisfaction which every sinner owes to God.⁹¹

F.W. Dillistone comments on the importance of this section for Anselm's argument. A fortiori, the passage deserves scrutiny in assessing Aulén's criticism of Anselm's atonement ideas. Dillistone observes that "the key chapter is the eleventh in Book One (Cur Deus Homo)," since "it begins with Anselm asking what it is to sin and what to make satisfaction for sin."⁹² Dillistone observes: "Is sin anything else than not rendering to God what is his due? But what is man's due? It is summed up in the one word honour...."⁹³ Dillistone recognizes how critical the honor concept is for Anselm's satisfaction design: "The crucial idea governing the whole structure is that of honour and it is impossible to assess the argument of the Cur Deus Homo rightly except against the background of this idea."⁹⁴

To explain this notion of honor, Dillistone turns to R.W. Southern who reviews the concept in relationship to the feudal atmosphere of Anselm's time:

In the language of feudal tenure a man's honour was his estate. Normally this was a unit of land, but the term honour also embraced his title and status. The fundamental crime against a lord and against the social order, was to attempt to diminish the lord's honour. The seriousness of the crime was quite independent of the rebel's power to give effect to his evil intentions; it was his disloyalty, the loosening of the social bond which outlawed him. At the time when Anselm was writing, the word "honour" was at the height of its development as a term of social importance. It was the maintenance of a king's "honour" which preserved his kingdom, of a baron's honour which preserved his barony and so on down the scale....Anselm's references to God's honour are to be interpreted in the light of contemporary usage. God's honour is the whole complex of service and worship which the whole creation, animate and inanimate, in heaven and earth, owes to the Creator.⁹⁵

An essential quality of this honor due to God is its intimate connection to God's creative purpose for the universe. In that sense, Anselm's presentation objectivizes the concept of honor and connects it inseparably with the person of God.⁹⁶

Reflecting on this question, Dillistone summarizes Anselm's intention and strategy in Cur Deus Homo:

Anselm's diagnosis of the human situation is fundamental to his argument. Man's failure to give due honour to God constitutes a weight, a debt, a doom. If he is to be saved from irretrievable disaster he must in some way make satisfaction. Yet it is obvious that this is quite outside his competence. How then can God's original purpose for man be fulfilled? Only if a new man can be found, a man who by perfect obedience can satisfy God's honour himself and by some work of complete supererogation can provide the means of paying the existing debt of his fellows. Such a one was the God-Man. By his unswerving obedience throughout his earthly life he perfectly fulfilled his own obligations as man: by his willing acceptance of death he established such a treasury of merit as would avail to pay the

debts of all mankind if they would simply look to him, accept his grace and be saved.⁹⁷

The stage is finally set for Anselm's satisfaction scheme of atonement.

Anselm freely accepts and employs such feudal images in his soteriological presentation since they convey the contemporary understanding of the "hierarchy and subordination" inherent in the very nature of all reality.⁹⁸ And in his exposition, the God-figure portrayed by Anselm is not that of "a jealous tyrant, greedy for recognition and honour," but rather this feudal God-image represents "rational order prevailing against the inroads of self-will and chaos."⁹⁹

Presenting sin as an offense against God's honor, Anselm delineates the idea that since God's honor must be upheld, God will demand this redress either by man's payment or by punishment.¹⁰⁰ The prime motivation here is not cruelty on the part of God but a concern with the order of creation; and God cannot be deficient in this.¹⁰¹ The "aut poena aut satisfactio" quality of Anselm's soteriology emerges: "...so that satisfaction or punishment must needs follow every sin."¹⁰²

Anselm's insistence on the restoration of God's honor has received a renewed treatment in the contemporary writers, Walter Kasper and Gisbert Greshake.¹⁰³ For both of them, Anselm's intention and purpose go beyond the confining legalistic characteristics cited invariably by Anselm's

critics, among them Gustaf Aulén. Greshake reinterprets Anselm's contribution from the standpoint of God's faithfulness to his creative purpose and man's freedom in his response to God. The satisfaction required is a positive action which guarantees man's freedom.¹⁰⁴ Greshake's interpretation of Anselm's satisfaction concept centers itself on man's freedom and God's faithfulness.

Walter Kasper describes this fresh appreciation for Anselm's soteriology:

It is not a question of restoring the honor of a jealous God; nor that of an abstract legal system....In the acknowledgement and restoration of God's honor we are concerned with freedom, peace, order and the fulfillment of the meaning of the world....By binding himself to the order of justice, God safeguards the honor due to man, respects man's freedom, and keeps faith with his creation. God's self-binding to the order of justice is the expression of his fidelity as Creator.¹⁰⁵

A similar attitude toward Anselm's soteriology is evident in A.E. McGrath's investigation of Anselm's notion of justice.¹⁰⁶ Herein McGrath disputes ideas such as Aulén's which fail in going beyond the apparent legalism in Anselm to a deeper conception of justice:

His [Anselm's] concept of justice is not that of a barbaric Lombard king, but that of a theologian convinced that God had created the world in rectitude, and was now acting in rectitude to redeem it. Far from representing an unwarranted intrusion on the part of law into religion, Anselm's soteriology represents the application of the conviction that God is just to the basic article of the Christian faith, the redemption of fallen mankind through Christ.¹⁰⁷

These observations made by Kasper, Greshake, and McGrath convey a novel approach in dealing with Anselm's

intentions; however, their interpretations can be criticized as displaying insights into concepts such as freedom, humanity and justice, which may reflect more of a contemporary understanding rather than that of Anselm's time and milieu. Nonetheless, these writers invite a refreshing look at Anselm's contribution despite the fact that many of the traditional criticisms directed at Anselm by Aulén and others still retain validity. Aulén's critique of the Latin type of atonement revolves around the apparent deficiencies of Anselm's entire enterprise.

Concerning the question of sin, one may validly inquire about the differences between Anselm's view and that of Aulén.¹⁰⁸ While both of them envision sin as a breach in the personal relationship between God and his creature, they likewise tend to shift attention away from sin as affecting the sinner himself. Anselm, for instance, concentrates on the dignity of the offended party, whereas Aulén's interest centers on the forces which entice humanity to disobedience and imperil the relationship with God.

Aulén criticizes Anselm's juridical attitude and insists that the classic view upholds the true nature of sin as a moral tyranny threatening mankind. In the classic view of atonement, Christ's victory breaks this power-hold of sin. Yet, one senses that something is missing. While Aulén's presentation emphasizes the power of sin, the personal aspect of sin as affecting each individual person appears unresolved.

In his 1947 work, "A Study of Three Theories of the Atonement," Daniel A. Baker reviews Anselm, Abelard, and Aulén.¹⁰⁹ He underscores the difficulties inherent in Aulén's approach to sin in that Aulén fails to consider guilt enough.¹¹⁰ Baker indicates that Aulén's concept leads to a type of universalism which inadequately handles the problem of sin:

Aulén never quite makes clear to whom the benefits of the atonement are to be applied, or how they are to be applied. He fails to discuss how the saving benefits of the work of Christ are to be made effectual to the believer.¹¹¹

Proposing a similar criticism, Kenneth J. Dale likewise faults Aulén's lack of appreciation for guilt and the individual aspect of sin.¹¹² Dale states clearly that Aulén seems most concerned about the tyrants external to man (not sin) and that the Christus Victor motif "has failed to give a satisfactory picture of the overcoming of sin itself."¹¹³ He points out that in dealing with the objective tyranny of evil, Aulén has manifested a failure in appreciating the subjective aspect of sin as a rebellion of man's will.¹¹⁴

Dale interestingly comments that Aulén's victory theology projects a certain imbalance in the matter of sin: "Although the problem of sin is supposedly provided for by the conquest, it is obvious that sin is really dealt with in a different manner, namely, through forgiveness."¹¹⁵ Further, Dale indicates that while the classic idea as presented by Aulén sufficiently handles the objective side

of sin, "the Christus Victor theory alone does not deal adequately with the entire concept of sin."¹¹⁶

In his presentation, Dale exposes a dichotomy between the conquest affecting the objective side of sin and the divine forgiveness on the subjective side. Certainly, Aulén objects to such a dichotomy and yet, Dale's position demonstrates the deficiency of the classic view in failing to relate forgiveness to the atonement explicitly.¹¹⁷

The comments of both Baker and Dale are apropos to the question of sin in a consideration of Anselm. By indicating the defects of the classic view in this regard, they bring attention to a notable feature of Anselm's presentation. A distinct, positive advantage of the satisfaction-merit pattern of Anselm's theology consists in its capacity to address both the objective and subjective aspects of sin. Anselm's satisfaction plan accounts for redressing the personal injury to God's dignity as well as effecting the restoration of the personal relationship between God and his creature. Hence, with all its imperfections, the Latin type of atonement presents a specificity which Aulén's classic view in its generality misses.

The Anselmian notion of sin as dishonor to God, not directly harming God but violating his order and plan for the universe,¹¹⁸ demands some sort of action from man who has caused this state of affairs. God's purpose cannot fail; this is of paramount importance. Anselm has another

reason in his mind for asserting that salvation is needed; this notion deals with his concept of the fallen angels.

Time and time again in his treatise, Anselm repeats his opinion concerning God's indefectibility in respect to his creation; God's plan must not be brought to nothing. A secondary reason for God redeeming man is Anselm's assertion that man is destined to take the place of the fallen angels. In a long digression in the Cur Deus Homo,¹¹⁹ Anselm discusses his views on angels and their relationship to the soteriological topic he is considering. Underlying Anselm's thinking is a general presupposition of a completeness of number in regard to creation. Man must make up for the lack resulting from the fall of the angels. In his angels' discussion, Anselm manifests one of the recurrent features of his work, his presupposition of divine order; the whole question of a completeness and perfection in number of created natures exemplifies this.¹²⁰

This section on the angels in the Cur Deus Homo serves the purpose of demonstrating Anselm's insistence on a divine order according to which humanity's salvation is to be worked out. Anselm is not primarily interested in the question of the angelic nature but in the design of the creator. Regarding man's sinfulness and subsequent rehabilitation, Anselm's thought is wholly determined by the satisfaction framework.¹²¹

F. Anselm's Satisfaction Idea

The principal criticism of Gustaf Aulén regarding Anselm and the Latin type of atonement centers on two dominant issues. Aulén speaks of these in the Christus Victor lectures: 1) "the whole idea is essentially legalistic"; 2) "the emphasis is all laid on that which is done by Christ as man in relation to God."¹²² Having been criticized for his treatment of Anselm, Aulén, nevertheless, repeats the same misgivings concerning the Latin atonement theory in his later book, The Drama and the Symbols:

The objections most frequently raised have been against my treatment of the doctrines of redemption of medieval and post-Reformation scholasticism....The crux of the matter is that in the very theological structure there was a tendency to rational explanation, a rationalization which had fatal results for the image of God....¹²³

Aulén's criticism bears upon what he sees as a rationalistic approach to atonement with detrimental effects concerning Christ's work and the image of God.

Both of Aulén's critical points, "the legalistic structure" and "the emphasis on what Christ does as man," are linked to how Aulén understands and interprets the idea of satisfaction as atonement. He concentrates on Anselm as the principal figure in his critique.

To exemplify his satisfaction idea, Anselm uses the example of a choice pearl.¹²⁴ The precious pearl is possessed by a wealthy man; the man allows it to be struck from his hand and to fall into filth even though he could

have prevented it. Would the man then be wise in taking the soiled pearl, filthy and unwashed, and committing it to a beautiful box? Anselm relates this to God:

Would not God be acting like this, who held man in paradise, as it were in his own hand, without sin, and destined to the society of angels, and allowed the devil, inflamed with envy, to cast him into the mire of sin, though truly with man's consent? For, had God chosen to restrain the devil, the devil could not have tempted man. Now I say, would not God be acting like this, should he restore man, stained with the defilement of sin, unwashed, that is, without any satisfaction, and always to remain so; should he restore him at once to paradise, from which he had been thrust out?¹²⁵

This passage contains many of the foremost elements of Anselm's whole thinking: God's power over the devil; the devil as filled with malice and enviousness of man; man sinning freely and not by constraint; the unfitness of God's leaving sin undischarged in the order of creation.

Voluntary payment of the debt owed to the honor of God constitutes the satisfaction; mankind must pay this or God will exact the restoration of creation's order by punishment. Developing this thought, Anselm discusses such matters as self-denial, repentance and bodily sufferings.¹²⁶ Anselm claims that these do not avail for salvation since they are already owed in obedience and submission to the creator.¹²⁷

Building up his satisfaction structure, Anselm discourses further on the meaning of sin. Here Anselm makes his famous statement, "You have not as yet estimated the great burden of sin."¹²⁸ And Anselm soon comes to the nucleus of his satisfaction idea:

Therefore you make no satisfaction unless you restore something greater than the amount of that obligation, which should restrain you from committing the sin.¹²⁹

Anselm has already touched on this same notion of something "greater than the obligation" which is necessary to make the redress. This occurs earlier in his work:

He who does not render this honor which is due to God, robs God of his own and dishonors him; and this is sin. Moreover, so long as he does not restore what he has taken away, he remains in fault; and it will not suffice merely to restore what has been taken away, but, considering the contempt offered, he ought to restore more than he took away.¹³⁰

One observes that a keynote of the satisfaction idea consists in not just restoring a loss or replacing what was damaged or destroyed but going beyond that. This "going beyond" appears understandable when one realizes that in all of this, man deals not just with restoring things, position, or inheritance, but with rectifying a personal injury. In this case, the personal offense concerns the very honor of God. Personal insult or injury carries with it more than just a simple restoration of what has been taken away. Much depends here on the nature of the person injured since this determines whether satisfaction is complete.

This connection with the character of the person offended enables Anselm to affirm that God in himself is not injured, but that it is an insult to his honor as incurred from man's side. Anselm explains his view:

For as one who imperils another's safety does not enough by merely restoring his safety, without making some compensation for the anguish incurred; so he who violates another's honor does not enough

by merely rendering honor again, but must, according to the extent of the injury done, make restoration in some way satisfactory to the person whom he has dishonored. We must also observe that when anyone pays what he has unjustly taken away, he ought to give something which could not have been demanded of him, had he not stolen what belonged to another. So then, everyone who sins ought to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God; and this is the satisfaction which every sinner owes to God.¹³¹

personal affront demands more than just giving back; again, the satisfaction follows closely the nature of the person offended. Anselm's insistence on this latter point avoids the difficulties inherent in the question, "If one deals with personal injury here, in what way is God personally offended?" Anselm answers carefully: not in himself as he is but, as seen from man's side, in the disruption of the order and beauty of the universe which insults his honor.¹³²

As Anselm follows through in his discussion, he probes what precisely man took away from the creator by refusing to follow God's will.¹³³ He then goes on to speak of the devil and man in their roles of "taking away" from God:

Listen to the voice of strict justice; and judge according to that whether man makes to God a real satisfaction for his sin, unless, by overcoming the devil, man restore to God what he took away from God in allowing himself to be conquered by the devil; so that, as by this conquest over man the devil took what belonged to God, and God was the loser, so in man's victory the devil may be despoiled, and God recover his right.¹³⁴

The question arises concerning who exactly took away what God had intended for his creation. Even though the passage predicates this of both the devil and man, Anselm's satisfaction idea treats of man as restoring what was taken away. Man and God emerge as adversaries with the devil as a

contributor, rather than God and the devil, with man as the one whom each wants under his command.

Using the device of parallel, Anselm emphasizes man's role in satisfaction. Man must return to God all that he has taken from him, "so that, as by man God suffered loss, by man, also he might recover his loss."¹³⁵ But a sinful nature cannot accomplish this, and since all human nature has been tainted with sin, God will not choose one of such a race: "A sinful man can by no means do this, for a sinner cannot justify a sinner."¹³⁶ Anselm is setting the stage for Christ's role as the God-man redeemer.

Before Anselm comes to the central exposition of satisfaction through the God-man in Book Two of the Cur Deus Homo, he considers the question of immortality and necessity in relation to God. Anselm indicates that had mankind not sinned, humanity would not be subject necessarily to death since God made man to enjoy eternal blessedness. While Anselm is convinced that mortality is not an essential attribute of man,¹³⁷ his statement in this particular setting revolves around immortality as a moral quality connected with uprightness, and mortality as the penalty incurred by evil doing. The context here is a moral rather than a metaphysical one. Following this line of thought, Anselm treats of the notion of necessity in regard to God's intention to save mankind. He insists that necessity in this case is undertaken freely and without restraint;¹³⁸ God freely "bound himself" to complete the good he had begun.¹³⁹

Having carefully demonstrated the need for man's salvation, Anselm centers his atonement proposal on the figure of the God-man, the Deus-Homo. Aulén's critical appraisal of what Anselm has to say relates directly to how Anselm frames satisfaction in regard to Christ's person. The satisfaction proposal with its logic and rationality judged in itself appears suitable; in relation to the salvific work of Christ, however, Aulén insists that it poses serious theological problems.

G. Anselm and the Deus-Homo

Introducing the most extensive treatment of the God-man in his work, Anselm reviews his thoughts on satisfaction. He affirms that the price paid to God for this sin of man must be greater than all the universe besides God; it is necessary that he who can give God anything of his own, which is more valuable than all things in God's possession, must be greater than all else but God himself.¹⁴⁰ So he concludes that none but God can make this needed reparation. Anselm realizes that this is not sufficient for the problem. It is not God who ought to make satisfaction, but man who is the offender. Hence, Anselm arrives at his famous declaration:

If it be necessary, therefore, as it appears, that the heavenly kingdom be made up of men, and this cannot be effected unless the aforesaid satisfaction be made, which none but God can make and none but man ought to make, it is necessary for the God-man to make it.¹⁴¹

This then emerges as the classic Anselmian stance: man ought to make satisfaction but he cannot; only God can make the satisfaction; hence, the two are joined together lest God's design and purpose fail.

Anselm describes the unity of the two natures of the God-man who accomplishes the necessary satisfaction.¹⁴² He also considers the race of Adam and the relationship between this lineage and the Deus-homo; Anselm parallels Adam and the Deus-homo. The one who makes satisfaction must be the being who has offended or be of the same line as the offender.¹⁴³ Since Adam would have been the being in whom the whole human race would have been confirmed in goodness had he not sinned, so now the Deus-homo is the being by and in whom the race will stand confirmed.¹⁴⁴ Anselm emphasizes the point that the one who satisfies for the offense must be of the race of the offenders lest God's purpose for the race seem to fail.¹⁴⁵ For Anselm this Deus-homo figure accomplishes the needed satisfaction for mankind's sinfulness.¹⁴⁶

Having structured his argument around the figure of Deus-homo, Anselm treats of how the debt is repaid and satisfaction made. He first affirms that the Deus-homo does not die by debt as all others do; he is not subject to death.¹⁴⁷ Anselm compares him to the figure of Adam and again asserts his opinion concerning man's immortality.¹⁴⁸ Anselm's primary position in regard to mortality vis-à-vis

the God-man is that he is not subject to death, neither by nature nor for moral reasons.

Anselm discusses the death of the God-man in the context of gift. This giving of himself to God is done freely and not by debt; and because of the situation, it must be something greater than anything in the possession of God.¹⁴⁹ Anselm reaffirms that this must not be owed.¹⁵⁰ He goes then to the question of death itself. Anselm rules out any notion of salvation that would place man's redemption and the restoration of balance in God's design merely in the obedience of the God-man, since such obedience is owed even in the God-man because he is truly man.¹⁵¹ The giving of his life and the taking on of death constitute the rendering of something beyond what is owed; the God-man ought not to die.¹⁵²

Anselm insists on Christ's freedom in the matter of mankind's redemption; he asserts: "...it is clear that his inability to avoid death is nothing else but his fixed choice to die."¹⁵³ The death of the God-man is not compelled by the Father; it is a free decision made by Christ.¹⁵⁴ Anselm makes a distinction between direct obedience and what happens subsequent to keeping obedience perfect.¹⁵⁵ He does this precisely to avoid the conclusion that the Father orders directly the death of the Son; to assert this would be to confirm the very objections which give rise to the entire discussion at hand. Such a distinction holds importance in Anselm's thought for several

reasons. First, in Anselm's thinking, God must not be seen as directly commanding the death of Christ. Second, and possibly more important for the coherency of the Cur Deus Homo, obedience is owed to God by every rational creature including Christ.¹⁵⁶ So, death in obedience really does not constitute sufficient grounds for redemption; something beyond obedience must be had. The satisfaction scheme necessitates this.

Striving to preserve the dignity of the Father in this plan of salvation, Anselm's anxiety causes him to minimize the Father's involvement. In this way, Anselm appears to compromise the full activity of God: "For the sentence: 'God spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all,' means nothing more than he did not rescue him."¹⁵⁷ Such a position diminishes the real impact of the Father's role in redemption. Anselm falters as he struggles to avoid a scene of the Father directly willing Christ's death.

In dealing with the relationship between the Father and Christ's submission to death, Anselm treats of two types of necessity: antecedent and subsequent. He states:

There is an antecedent necessity which is the cause of a thing, and there is also a subsequent necessity arising from the thing itself. Thus, when the heavens are said to revolve, it is an antecedent and efficient necessity, for they must revolve. But when I say that you speak of necessity, because you are speaking, this is nothing but a subsequent and inoperative necessity.¹⁵⁸

This subsequent necessity characterizes the death of the Deus-homo. Anselm affirms:

For this he became man; for this he did and suffered all things undertaken by him; for this he chose as he did. For therefore were they necessary, because they were to be, and they were to be because they were...and, if you wish to know the real necessity of all things which he did and suffered, know that they were of necessity, because he wished ¹⁵⁹them to be. But no necessity preceded his will.

Hence, Christ freely pays this debt to God and of him Anselm says, "No man except this one ever gave to God what he was not obliged to lose, or paid a debt that he did not owe."¹⁶⁰

In Book Two, chapter nineteen, Anselm's attention turns specifically to the question of how man's salvation rests on the death of the God-man. Anselm maintains that one who gives so freely so great a gift to God is deserving of recompense.¹⁶¹ A reward then consists in either giving something which the one to be rewarded does not have, or else remitting some rightful claim upon him.¹⁶² Because the God-man is the Son, one asks how can a reward be bestowed on one who needs nothing of this sort;¹⁶³ nevertheless, some return is required lest the Son's work be seen as done in vain.¹⁶⁴ Hence, Anselm concludes the reward must be given to someone else.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Anselm asserts that rightfully the Father bestows the reward in accordance with the wishes of the Son.¹⁶⁶ So the return gained by the Deus-homo goes to sinful men; they are redeemed and the debt owed by man is satisfied. Anselm reviews his whole case:

It is also plain that God had no need of doing the thing spoken of, but eternal truth demanded it. For though God is said to have done what that man did, on account of the personal union made; yet God was in no need of descending from heaven to conquer the devil, nor of contending against him

in holiness to free mankind. But God demanded that man should conquer the devil, so that he who had offended by sin should atone by holiness. As God owed nothing to the devil but punishment, so man must only make amends by conquering the devil as man had already been conquered by him. But whatever was demanded of man, he owed to God and not to the devil.¹⁶⁷

Such is God's great compassion and justice. Anselm makes his thinking clear:

For what compassion can excel these words of the Father, addressed to the sinner doomed to eternal torments and having no way of escape: "Take my only begotten Son and make him an offering for yourself;" or these words of the Son: "Take me, and ransom your souls." For these are the voices they utter, when inviting and leading us to faith in the Gospel.¹⁶⁸

Anselm's soteriological exposition in the Cur Deus Homo eventually brings the reader to this realization of the mercy and love of God made known through the figure of the God-man and his work of salvation.

H. Critical Observations

Reviewing the satisfaction argument, Aulén does not specifically discount Anselm's syllogistic procedure. Instead, he centers his critique on the meaning behind the reasoning and the manner in which it attempts to respond to a paradoxical and deeply religious issue, mankind's salvation. Yet, the very vulnerability of Anselm's reasoning adds weight to Aulén's criticism.

In his book on Anselm, R.W. Southern includes a section on "The Logic of the Deus-Homo" which is

illuminative for the discussion. Southern analyzes the weakness of Anselm's argument from the viewpoint that Anselm's use of terms is not univocal. Hence, Anselm's reasoning faces the objection: either the argument presents a defect in logic; or the argument lacks the force Anselm intended by setting up his soteriological dilemma.¹⁶⁹ The problem concerns Anselm's use of the concepts of "owe" and "ought" and their negatives. The difficulty arises from how Anselm employs this terminology. Southern states:

In his use of the word debeo Anselm did not make a clear distinction between 'I owe' and 'I ought.' The confusion was one that was especially easy for him to make. For one thing, debeo both etymologically and practically suggested the sense of debt. Also, Anselm's basic conception of duty, in keeping with the general feudal framework of his practical thinking, was that of a debt owed by an inferior to a superior. So he had a tendency to interpret all 'ought' in terms of 'owe,' and likewise 'ought not' in terms of 'does not owe.' And this is precisely the ambiguity with which we are confronted in this argument. To be compelling, the word must be understood in the absolute sense; but to be consistent, it must be understood in the other, weaker, sense.¹⁷⁰

Southern's basic contention is that Anselm's argument either must maintain the force of the moral dilemma involved and risk being invalidated by its terminology, or rearrange its meaning of terms and then be fatally weakened.¹⁷¹ It appears, then, that the various senses of "ought" and "owe" of the Latin word debeo cause this ambiguity in Anselm's proposition.¹⁷² Southern reflects that this case discloses "the two levels at which Anselm's thought habitually moved - the level of linguistic analysis, and that of metaphysical speculation."¹⁷³

As far as Gustaf Aulén is concerned, his attention focuses not on the ambiguity or inconsistency of Anselm's terminology, but rather on the general meaning behind Anselm's methodology. From Anselm's speaking of a "debitum," the argument reaches a highpoint in seeking out that man who can make adequate compensation to God.

John McIntyre examines this point in speaking of Anselm's statement in the Cur Deus Homo where Anselm proposes, "Just as Adam and the whole race would have stood by itself without the support of any other creature had he not sinned, so it is fitting that the same race after the fall should rise and remain upright through itself."¹⁷⁴ Regarding Anselm's thoughts, McIntyre reflects that they seem "to lend weight to the criticism made by Gustaf Aulén in Christus Victor, namely, that St. Anselm does not treat atonement as the work of God from start to finish."¹⁷⁵

For Aulén, Anselm's methodology entails this type of soteriological discontinuity and fails to recognize the paradoxical nature of religious reality. In Christus Victor he contrasts this view of atonement with the classic presentation. Concerning the former, Aulén declares: "The atonement is worked out according to the strict requirements of justice..." while in the latter, "...the classic idea of the atonement defies rational systematisation; its essential double-sidedness, according to which God is at once the Reconciler and the Reconciled, constitutes an antimony which cannot be resolved by rational statement."¹⁷⁶

Aulén, therefore, remains highly critical of the structure and methodology by which Anselm seeks to establish the necessary historical fact of Christ's Incarnation and saving work.¹⁷⁷ What Aulén is particularly sensitive to is not the result Anselm strives to achieve, but the thinking which compromises the sovereignty of God and adds an apparently syncretistic dimension to atonement. John McIntyre expresses a serious misgiving when he comments on Anselm's presentation, observing that certain statements "lay St. Anselm open to the charge that he regards Christ as a man in his life, and as a God-man in his death."¹⁷⁸ This observation bears on Aulén's position when he indicates that this "discontinuity" in the atonement results from a denigration of dualism/antagonism and from the starting-point (man) of the whole satisfaction procedure.

John McIntyre's book on Anselm directly counters Gustaf Aulén's critique, referring to Aulén's work as "refreshing, though some of his criticisms stand or fall with his own thesis."¹⁷⁹ He accuses Aulén of "a mistaken conception of the Deus-homo, of the two natures in this one Person, and of their respective relations to the satisfactio offered in the death of Christ."¹⁸⁰ Aulén's mistake, McIntyre adds, "is one of emphasis rather than of outright misrepresentation."¹⁸¹ McIntyre asserts that Aulén misses a very basic terminological fact which relates to the discussion: Anselm's "use of the name Deus-homo as a single concept...the point of the title of the work, which is not

'Why did God become man?' but 'Why the God-man?'"¹⁸² This hyphenation of the term conveys the explicit sense of Anselm's intention.¹⁸³ McIntyre affirms that Aulén misreads Anselm in holding "that the homo takes over all the attributes of the Deus and, as it were on his own, offers to God satisfaction adequate to atone for the sins of mankind."¹⁸⁴

McIntyre's thinking also disputes Aulén's assertion of the "discontinuity" of Anselm's atonement theory and presses the point that both for the classic idea and for Anselm, it is "directly the work of God."¹⁸⁵ McIntyre then indicates that if Aulén's presentation portrays the work of Christ as "literally the work of God from start to finish, then he is committed to a theologically inadequate view of the Person of Jesus Christ, for he reduces to zero the part played by the human nature of Our Lord in the Incarnation and the atonement."¹⁸⁶ The author then states that Aulén is either guilty of docetism or he is forced to see the humanity of Christ as merely instrumental in achieving the victory over evil,¹⁸⁷ which latter point seriously damages the integrality of the person of Christ. The heart of the problem here may lie in the fact that the divine and human natures should be considered not as quasi-quantitative elements of the redeeming Christ, but as aspects or dimensions of this particular individual. Aulén's methodology, when properly understood, seems to offer an

alternative to an argumentation that appears stalled over the question of natures.

McIntyre also takes up Aulén's criticism that the Anselmic soteriology is filled with the juridical views and legalism of the medieval outlook.¹⁸⁸ He disagrees with Aulén and insists that Anselm's theory relates directly to a "sola gratia theme," and that "Aulén's all too facile classification of St. Anselm with the post-Reformation theologians, as if he were their complete prototype, has led to a certain falsification on his part of St. Anselm's view."¹⁸⁹

This author also objects to Aulén's presentation of the merit concept as if men earn efficacious merit apart from God.¹⁹⁰ While Aulén's statement is a general one ("When he comes to speak of penance for sins committed after Baptism, Anselm, like other Latin theologians, allows that men can earn merit in God's sight."),¹⁹¹ McIntyre's rebuttal does not solve the problem since his own statement is subject to a variety of interpretations.¹⁹² McIntyre may indeed be reading Anselm's intentions correctly; yet, at the same time, Aulén understands the structure of satisfaction-merit in the light of how the Middle Ages experientially felt and interpreted this pattern. While McIntyre's study properly seeks to comprehend Anselm's satisfaction idea within his own use of it ("The meaning of the word as it appears in Anselmic soteriology is to be discovered, therefore, not by an historical analysis of

previous uses of it, but by an examination of the place which it occupies within his scheme."),¹⁹³ nevertheless, the atmosphere of the Middle Ages and the practical use of the penitential system cannot be ignored. Even if one concedes McIntyre's point that "Anselm's interpretation of satisfaction is not reducible to its antecedents,"¹⁹⁴ Aulén's basic critique of it still retains validity.

A potentially problematic assertion of Anselm's which Aulén does not take up directly involves Anselm's idea that "something more" or beyond what is owed must be given to the one offended.¹⁹⁵ If this is the essence of the situation, then even this "something more" appears as owed from the very nature of redressing the personal offense. This then diminishes significantly the applicable merit earned by Christ.

In presenting the classic view of atonement, Gustaf Aulén remains anxious to preserve and exalt the sovereignty of God's love in the redemptive work. He sees Anselm's Latin view as not only introducing a certain questionable "discontinuity," but likewise as weakening this sovereignty of God's redeeming agape by its rationalistic and juridical stress on prevailing divine justice. In Christus Victor Aulén observes that "the atonement is not accomplished by strict fulfillment of the demands of justice, but in spite of them; God is not, indeed, unrighteous, but he transcends the order of justice."¹⁹⁶

Many of the crucial questions concerning Anselm's satisfaction theory are found in a variety of authors. A survey of some of these writers provides a deeper insight into Gustaf Aulén's disagreement with Anselm's production and its subsequent application in Christian theology.

Despite his sincere praise for Anselm's noteworthy theological contribution, J. Rivière demonstrates certain significant deficiencies in the satisfaction presentation. Rivière faults Anselm for not sufficiently emphasizing Christ's human freedom in the divine plan and for failing "to establish an intimate solidarity between Christ and ourselves."¹⁹⁷ In this lack of solidarity, Rivière goes on to indicate that Anselm's scheme calls for a "new and special act" so that the merit achieved by Christ can be then applied to sinful mankind.¹⁹⁸ Rivière states: "This manner of conceiving of the application of Christ's merits is explained by the legal procedure adopted by St. Anselm, but this explanation is not a sufficient excuse for the artificial and mechanical character of his scheme. This is the weakest point in St. Anselm's system."¹⁹⁹

Coming as it does from a supporter of Anselm, Rivière's criticism bolsters Aulén's own critique of the same point. Christus Victor insists on a continuity of the divine action.²⁰⁰ Both the lack of solidarity between Christ and sinful mankind and the need for a special act whereby salvation is applied to man disclose a breach in the continuous flow of divine action. Along these lines, Aulén

reviews and strengthens the notion of Christ's solidarity with sinful mankind in The Drama and the Symbols.²⁰¹

Rivière further explains that the obligation of necessity adopted by God for mankind's redemption has presented an ongoing problem for theologians.²⁰² While Aulén remains aware of this difficulty, his attention turns in greater measure to the means by which God's plan is accomplished. Reading chapter five of Christus Victor, one recognizes that Aulén's challenge of Anselm moves beyond the philosophical/theological question of the necessity in the divine plan to such issues as Anselm's rejection of dualism, the juridical framework, the emphasis on the human role, the transference of merit, etc.²⁰³ Aulén shows no particular interest in challenging Anselm on the necessity of the divine action; this is evident from his exposition in Christus Victor. The same holds true for Aulén's consideration of Anselm in his Dogmhistoria²⁰⁴ and Das christliche Gottesbild.²⁰⁵ What disturbs Aulén most is Anselm's legalistic structure which endangers the whole notion of redemption as a gift of God's grace.²⁰⁶

The theological contribution of Anselm forms a part of Sydney Cave's treatment of Christ's saving work in his 1937 book, The Doctrine of the Work of Christ.²⁰⁷ The author emphasizes the point that the immediate source of Anselm's theory is not so much Germanic law but rather the Church's penitential praxis.²⁰⁸ He proposes two salient objections

to Anselm's redemption view; one concerning the image of God, the other relating to man.

Cave sees in Anselm's thought a severe deficiency in how God is presented:

...in his discussion of satisfaction, Anselm speaks of God as if he were no more than a private person, desiring that satisfaction should be paid to him for the injury done. This is more than a defect of logic....the theory, against Anselm's own desire, implies that there is in the Godhead a difference of character, and that is an error more fatal in its effect than Arius' assertion of a difference of substance. Christ's love is clear, less clear is the love of God who receives in the offering of Christ's life something ²⁰⁹ greater than the injury done to him by man's sin.

Advancing his second criticism, Cave denies that Anselm's scheme adequately connects Christ's action and mankind's salvation.²¹⁰ Speaking of Christ's death, Cave contends that it is the prerequisite to a salvation which has little relation to it.²¹¹

Both of Cave's criticisms of Anselm's satisfaction plan cohere with Aulén's critique. For Aulén, regardless of the insistence on the contrary, Anselm's ideas imperil the consistency and continuity of the divine character; the satisfaction-merit pattern likewise projects a disjunction between what Christ achieves and how this relates to the sinner. Cave crystallizes Aulén's thinking when he critically assesses Anselm's position in these terms: "More than its logical defect is its religious inadequacy."²¹² This point of religious adequacy runs throughout all of Aulén's theology and forms the ultimate criterion for his rejection of the other atonement types. For Gustaf Aulén,

the "religious inadequacy" of the Latin and subjective approaches to Christ's atoning action contrasts with the superiority and enduring quality of the dramatic-dualistic view.

Cave sets down two other characteristics of redemption theory that must be appreciated if atonement is to be genuine: 1) salvation must "deal with men who neither realize nor mourn their sin";²¹³ and 2) "no view of Christ's work is fully Christian which does not see in the work of Christ the love of God."²¹⁴ Anselm's satisfaction theory does not fulfill these two criteria to the extent that Aulén's classic stance does.

Cave is favorably disposed toward Aulén's proposal and utilizes his typology.²¹⁵ He indicates the superiority of the classic approach over Anselm's idea, particularly in confronting the hostile situation of evil in the world:

Yet, however we interpret the forces of evil, we know ourselves encompassed about by forces which threaten to engulf the world in ruin. It is not an individual salvation only that we need, but the assurance of God's victory over corporate evil....When we pass from form to content, we find in it [the classic view] elements of truth that cannot wisely be ignored. It speaks not of a God who needs to be satisfied, but of a God who in his grace has dealt with our human need in such a way that, however strong evil appears, we know it cannot conquer. Christ is conceived not as victim but as victor. His death appears not as the satisfaction of God's justice but as the victory of his love and power.²¹⁶

Cave recognizes the importance of acknowledging the solidarity of evil which oppresses man; for him the classic atonement idea possesses a distinct advantage in this

regard. His sentiments therefore concur with Aulén's victory soteriology.²¹⁷

The general criticisms of the Latin atonement type delineated by Aulén and other authors appear somewhat moderate compared to the critique of Anselm presented by George C. Foley in the Bohlen Lectures delivered in Philadelphia in 1908.²¹⁸ While Foley's work is completely separate from Aulén's Christus Victor, the defects Foley identifies fit Aulén's disagreement with Anselm's satisfaction theory. These points by Foley can be enumerated:

- 1) a "contradiction" in Anselm concerning Christ's obedience; the voluntary endurance of what was not demanded of him appears to conflict with such Scripture passages as Phil. 2:8, Heb. 5:8, Rom. 8:32, John 6:38, John 18:11, Mt. 26:39;²¹⁹
- 2) the inconsistency evident in the fact that men forgive one another freely yet God demands satisfaction;²²⁰
- 3) satisfaction stands wholly outside of Scripture; the New Testament is totally silent on its essential elements;²²¹
- 4) the satisfaction concept is steeped in external and institutional categories;²²²
- 5) the theory is flawed in its abstract and rationalistic explanation since, Foley states, "his [Anselm's] general postulates are so alien to

Christian ideas of God's nature and relation to us, his syllogisms are so fallacious, that the pretentious structure is manifestly without foundation."²²³

Foley goes on to posit an even further devastating objection: Anselm "has no understanding of real salvation because he has no real understanding of sin....It is an affront to a great dignitary, a laesa majestas...."²²⁴ Following this assertion, Foley insists that Anselm refuses to recognize the full implications of the personal aspect of sin:

A personal quality cannot be treated as similar to a pecuniary or legal liability. It cannot be measured, or compared in quantity, or offset by an equivalent. It is not an obligation that may be shifted to another or assumed by him....It may be forgiven, it may₂₂₅ be altered, but it does not admit of compensation.

Foley's perception conceives of sin in its fullest dimensions as moral, personal, ethical and real. The sinful state then becomes the dreadful penalty which Anselm's satisfaction cannot address adequately.²²⁶ Likewise, Foley comments that if Anselm's theory upholds the position that God's honor requires indemnification, then God sent his Son into the world "for his own sake, not for ours."²²⁷ God then is pictured as acting "altogether unlike God in order that he might be enabled to act like God."²²⁸

In his study, Foley acknowledges the positive dimension of Anselm in improving upon the primitive explanations of the Patristic age and in his contribution to

the development of modern personal religion,²²⁹ but this exposition reveals serious defects in the satisfaction theory.

Aulén's own unhappiness with the satisfaction type receives support from Foley's investigation although Aulén's writings do not exhibit all the points mentioned by Foley. Nonetheless, one can easily admit that Foley's critical analysis fits well into the intention of Aulén's critique of Anselm's satisfaction theory.

A study which presents Anselmian soteriology in a more favorable light than that of Aulén is Harm Alpers' Die Versöhnung durch Christus (1964).²³⁰ Alpers emphasizes that Anselm's idea of sin is more than just a rigidly determined legalistic-moralistic concept.²³¹ He contends that the differences between the Latin type of atonement and the Lutheran development of the classic view are not as decisive as Aulén indicates.²³²

Concerning Anselm's satisfaction theory, Alpers stresses the continuity of God's redeeming activity throughout, and hence disputes Aulén's predication of a discontinuity in the divine action described in the Latin type.²³³ He employs a key word of Aulén's in his explanation ("zugleich"):

Gott ist aber nicht nur der Empfänger, sondern auch und zugleich als das personbildende Agens im Gottmenschen der Geber der Satisfactio, er ist in der Person des Sohnes der Opfernde, der sich durch seine menschliche Natur²³⁴ in einem geschöpflichen Leben, Gott darbringt.

Much of Alpers' exposition of the Latin type of atonement and its subsequent utilization by Lutheran Orthodoxy centers on the fact that God himself provides for and accomplishes the satisfaction. The discontinuity and lack of cohesiveness, as well as the impediment of its rationalistic structure, which displeases Aulén, seem to vanish in Alpers' congenial treatment of the satisfaction theory.²³⁵ Where Aulén is disturbed by a one-sided emphasis on man's place in satisfaction gives way in Alpers' analysis to an intensification of God's direct involvement. A typical passage reads:

Gott selbst vollzieht und erleidet in Christus sein Gericht, er tritt an unsere, der Sünder Stelle; er selber ist erschienen zur Sühne für sein Recht, misericordiae (sc. Dei) enim est, quod et sibiipsi satisfecit....²³⁶

Alpers stands sympathetically on the side of satisfaction as a work of God's grace and goodness: "...und allein Gottes Barmherzigkeit kann die Satisfactio Christi begründen."²³⁷ The sharp criticism of Anselm's theory presented by Aulén and others is absent from Alpers' evaluation.

Contrary to Aulén's stance, this author also sees a continuity between Anselm's concepts and the previous teaching of the Christian Church.²³⁸ Since Alpers comprehends Anselm's satisfaction scheme as functioning coherently with the victory notion, he joins them together and emphasizes that the victory results from the accomplishment of the satisfaction and not the reverse.²³⁹ He formally rejects Aulén's objections that in Anselmian

thinking, the human nature plays a singular role in atonement and that a fundamental disunity results in Christ's saving work.²⁴⁰ As Alpers presents his appraisal of the salvation theory, one recognizes that his understanding of Anselm differs markedly from Aulén's.²⁴¹

Jan Milič Lochman in his work, Reconciliation and Liberation, states: "To the question whether the Anselmian doctrine of satisfaction really does justice to the sovereignty of God's love in the history of Jesus Christ, I am inclined to answer No."²⁴² He compares Anselm to Aulén's classic view and agrees with Aulén's assertion of a "discontinuity" in the salvific work. Lochman affirms that in the Anselmian exposition, "God's love is tied down by conditions, presuppositions, performances."²⁴³ He criticizes Anselm's satisfaction scheme as one preoccupied with a "highly sophisticated dogmatic necessity" which obscures much of the evangelical sense of mankind's redemption.²⁴⁴ Lochman commends Anselm's intention and yet observes, "within the terms of reference of Anselm's doctrine, the sovereignty of this divine love can only be presented in a strangely fragmented fashion."²⁴⁵ For Lochman as for Aulén, the satisfaction structure of Anselm is what presents this difficulty.

Aulén's critique of Anselm in Christus Victor is in no sense a detailed study of Anselm's theological endeavors. It does, however, serve the purpose of highlighting the chief points of disagreement and difference between two

disparate notions of divine atonement. Aulén judges that Anselm's efforts, while noteworthy in the history of Christian thought, have led away from the soteriological view that best expresses the definitive work of Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection. That view must retain the idea of fierce struggle and ultimate victory. For Aulén, the "note of triumph" of the Apostolic Age²⁴⁶ must always signal the message of Christ's victory. If that "note of triumph" has been obscured somewhat in the Latin type of atonement of the Middle Ages, it is to sound out clearly once again in another notable figure of Christian history, Martin Luther. To Luther, Aulén turns with great attention and respect.

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CHAPTER SIX: Luther and the Christus Victor Theme

A. Introduction

As Gustaf Aulén presents and develops his soteriological theme of victory both in the published Olaus Petri lectures and throughout his other theological works, he centers much attention on the figure of Martin Luther. For Aulén, Luther signals a return to the pristine soteriological attitude of the early Christian Church which envisioned the redemption of mankind as an atonement drama played out in the midst of conflict and struggle. According to Aulén, the so-called Latin type of atonement deviated from this position by expressing atonement in a rationalistic scheme of satisfaction and merits. In this latter type, the picture of God and divine activity became restricted and confined. The God of dynamic action creating all things new in Christ seemed to get lost in an attempt to satisfy an order of justice. While Aulén may not be totally free of overdrawing his description of the Latin atonement type, nevertheless, the essential point he illustrates appears valid.

Throughout his theological career, Aulén considers Luther as the restorer of a more integral theological view in line with the central message of the Gospel. Over and above that, he understands Luther as one who develops the evangelical position even further. In the matter of

atonement, Aulén describes Luther in these terms: "Luther ist hier als Erneuerer und Vertiefer des klassischen Versöhnungsmotivs."¹

In this chapter we can look more closely at Aulén's evaluation of Luther's atonement ideas. And Aulén leaves no doubt as to where he intends to go in his thinking on Luther: "...Luther's teaching can only be rightly understood as a revival of the old classic theme of the atonement as taught by the Fathers, but with a greater depth of treatment."²

Aulén's claim as put forth in Christus Victor, particularly in chapters six and seven, does leave itself open to criticism. Aulén himself anticipates these critical judgments by articulating the specific methodological structure he employs in discussing atonement in Martin Luther.

B. Aulén's Proposal Concerning Luther

As Aulén elucidates Luther's theological approach to atonement, he capsulizes several reasons why Luther's teaching on the topic has been misunderstood: a) atonement doctrine did not appear as a "polemical issue" in Luther's time; b) "Luther's use, in a new sense, of such typically 'Latin' terms as satisfaction and merit was not unnaturally misunderstood"; c) the general confusion concerning the exclusivity of the "objective" and "subjective" views of

atonement prompted a general neglect for the uniqueness of the "classic" idea.³ Throughout his theological treatment of Luther in this regard, Aulén returns time and again to explaining this "misinterpretation of Luther's teaching."⁴

Constructing the opening part of the Luther chapter in the published Christus Victor, Aulén not only comments on this "misinterpretation," but likewise he delineates the points he considers as "decisive proof that Luther's teaching on the atonement belongs to the classic type."⁵

In a preliminary fashion Aulén mentions two distinct characteristics that are significant but that do not constitute the "decisive proof." He indicates that Luther does employ "images and forms of expression which are regularly characteristic of the classic idea of the atonement";⁶ similarly, he observes that "we constantly and regularly find in Luther the dramatic view of the work of Christ and its meaning as a divine conflict and victory."⁷ As regards this second affirmation, Aulén remarks that Luther delights in the vivid imagery that fits so well with divine conflict and struggle: "For him [Luther] no colors are too strong, no images too concrete; even the most grotesque analogies from the Fathers come back again...Luther seems to have special fondness for the grossest symbols of all, especially that of the deception of the devil."⁸ Yet, these two points afford only subsidiary support for the proposition concerning Luther's connection to the classic atonement idea.

Following through in his exposition, Aulén clearly enumerates the decisive areas wherein Luther's soteriological stance can be appraised. Aulén lists three points:

- 1) "in those places where it is altogether necessary for him to express himself with the greatest possible care and the greatest possible exactness, as, for instance, in the Catechisms, he always returns to the dramatic idea";
- 2) "he himself repeatedly assures us, with all possible clearness, that the statements of the meaning of the atonement in dramatic terms give the very essence of the Christian faith; they are capitalia nostrae theologiae";
- 3) "...and chiefly, the dramatic view of the work of Christ stands in organic relation with his theological outlook as a whole."⁹

Aulén reiterates the same concept in dealing with Lutheran Orthodoxy, stating emphatically that for Luther the classic view of Christ's saving action "pervaded all his work, but especially his most popular pieces, his Catechisms and his hymns...this idea of the atonement formed one organic whole with the central proclamation of the Reformation...."¹⁰

Along a similar line, however, Aulén indicates that Lutheran Orthodoxy did not take up Luther's movement in this

classic direction, but instead easily reverted to the Latin type of atonement with its emphasis on a satisfaction structure. Aulén observes that in atonement theology the followers of the Reformer stood closer to the medieval scheme of man's salvation; he claims that "perhaps there is no single point at which the men of that age showed such complete incapacity to grasp his meaning."¹¹ According to Aulén, "the result was the strange association of an anti-moralistic doctrine of sola gratia and a legalistic view of man's relation to God, which came as a result to be typical of Protestant Orthodoxy."¹² In a real sense, these two poles indicate the parameters of Aulén's treatment of atonement in Luther: Luther as the revival and deepening of the classic idea, and Lutheran Orthodoxy as the return to the legalistic tendencies of medieval redemption thinking.

Aulén's consideration of Luther bears importance not only for its particular role in Aulén's soteriological exposition, but also because it manifests the Luther revival characteristic of twentieth century Swedish theology. Aulén is both heir to that revival and a vital force within it.

C. Aulén and the Swedish Luther Renewal

To understand Aulén's approach to soteriology via Martin Luther, one must appreciate the importance of the Luther renewal in twentieth century Sweden. Hjalmar Lindroth's study, Lutherrenässansen i nyare svensk teologi

(Recent Theological Research in Sweden: A Luther Renaissance), clearly illustrates these developments and their importance for Aulén's work.¹³ Lindroth's assertion that "the history of systematic theology in our country, from the beginning of this century to the present time, essentially coincides with the history of Swedish Luther research for the same period,"¹⁴ aptly enunciates the ever-present Luther background to Gustaf Aulén's Christological endeavors.

In his study of the Swedish Luther renaissance, Lindroth examines Aulén's soteriological proposal. First of all, he describes Aulén's relationship to both Nathan Söderblom and Einar Billing. He remarks that Aulén "can perhaps be regarded primarily as a disciple of Söderblom's," and that Aulén shares with Söderblom "the personal feature in the evangelical God-relationship," as well as "the dualism characteristic of the Gospel."¹⁵ Speaking of Einar Billing, Lindroth details Billing's emphasis on the dramatic aspect of salvation and that "this has undeniably been of significance for Aulén, not only generally, in the determination of the unique character of evangelical Christianity, but also in his interpretation of central portions of Luther's views."¹⁶

Lindroth adds to these pioneering thinkers another theological influence for Aulén, that of N.J. Göransson: "...Göransson's presentation of the unresolved contrasts inhering in Luther's total God-concept, has not been without

significance for Aulén's delineation of Luther's God-concept ("gudsbild")...."¹⁷ Likewise, Lindroth insists that Ragnar Bring's work, Dualismen hos Luther (1929), not only has "followed up the incitement offered by Aulén" but has also "essentially adopted the method used by Aulén."¹⁸ The contributions of Göransson and Bring carry importance as an indication of the dualistic approach Aulén employs in portraying the various "tensions" in Luther's picture of God. This in turn bears relevancy for Aulén's exposition of Christ's salvific work.

In direct relationship to Luther's presentation of God, Lindroth explores Aulén's review of Göransson's ideas on the topic.¹⁹ Aulén, according to Lindroth, demonstrates certain antitheses which Göransson judges as integral to Luther's thinking:

- a) the antithesis between the revealed and hidden God;
- b) the antithesis between God's love and his condemning justice;
- c) the antithesis between "a more rationally motivated God-knowledge, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the strongest assertion as to the blindness of our reason in the matter of the knowledge of God";
- d) the antithesis within Christology, between "Christ's humanity through and through" and

"Christ as the eternal Son of God placed in the context of divine revelation."²⁰

Likewise, Aulén comments on Göransson's opinion that the antithesis between the hidden and revealed God "is the truly fundamental antinomy in our religious thinking" since this reveals an antithesis within God himself between his "sovereign and contending will."²¹

Aulén accords a secondary place to the antithesis between God's love and his condemning justice because "it does not penetrate as it were, so deeply into the very being of God."²² This assertion follows on Luther's view that "God's law and justice represent his opus alienum, alien work, but God's love and gospel, his opus proprium, personal work."²³ In this context, Lindroth's summary of Aulén's comments is noteworthy, since Aulén's statements cohere with his exposition of the image of God and with his objection to the Latin type of satisfaction scheme which stresses the primacy of an order of justice.

In keenly surveying Göransson's basic antitheses, Aulén remarks that "one does not need to speak of a real antithesis" in Luther's Christology because "the historical Jesus could never for Luther be the ground and object of faith."²⁴ Here Aulén manifests the "anti-historical" bias apparent in his theological works up to the 1960's, a prejudice that has its roots in the anti-Ritschlian stance of the Lundensian theologians.²⁵

Examining the Luther renewal in Sweden, Lindroth finds Aulén's review of Göransson's work to be important in that "whether in agreement or disagreement with Göransson, Aulén indicates several viewpoints which become dominant in his subsequent Luther research...."²⁶ As he himself portrays the image of God, Aulén concurs with Göransson's opinion that in Luther's thinking about God there exist unresolved and unharmonized antitheses which nonetheless express a "dynamic synthesis" of "unity in contrasts."²⁷ A point of departure for Aulén from Göransson, Lindroth mentions, is that Aulén prefers to speak of a "God-picture" rather than a "God-idea."²⁸

Lindroth's examination of Göransson and Aulén focuses attention on the importance of the Luther antitheses for Aulén's consideration of God in his soteriology. Aulén's ideas as formulated in Christus Victor, and its subsequent development, are linked to the image of God Aulén perceives in Luther's thought and which he expresses in such varied works as Den kristna gudsbilden and The Drama and the Symbols.

Lindroth goes on to speak of Aulén's own presentation of the image of God principally as outlined in Aulén's publication on this subject. He summarizes Aulén's thinking in a concise manner: the unity in the God-picture is not to be found through "a resolving synthesis of the dialectical" nor through "a gliding from one motif to another" as within medieval mysticism, but rather through "a tension-filled

unity of the faith-life itself."²⁹ In the soteriological area then, one can discern why Aulén's distinct preference is for Luther's integral understanding of God in the salvation drama and not for the attempt at rational adjustment evidenced in the Anselmian type. Furthermore, the influence of Nathan Söderblom's dualistic approach and of Einar Billing's emphasis on the dramatic can be observed in Aulén's method which treats of the God-image and the fact of man's salvation from this particular perspective: "a tension-filled unity of the faith-life itself, a synthesis, within which is contained surging life and inner conflict, but where the integral view is not lost."³⁰

Highlighting Aulén's presentation and its inherent importance for Aulén's atonement proposal, Lindroth summarizes five principal antitheses which Aulén exposes in Luther's theology: "In this tension-filled unity of the faith-life, 1) the thought of God's love and God's wrath are combined; likewise are combined the thoughts of: 2) God's love and power; 3) God's omnipotence and his struggle against an opposing evil power; 4) the revealed and the hidden God; 5) God's nearness to us and his remoteness from us."³¹ One can easily appreciate how Aulén's appraisal of these antitheses in Luther's theology proves relevant for a view of dramatic redemption achieved in conflict. Aulén's exposition of the classic atonement idea is based upon his affirmation that the Latin type and the humanistic salvation approach do not answer the specific questions raised by:

God's wrath toward evil, the power of God's sovereign love, God's apparent distance and hiddenness from mankind, and the very real power manifested by the forces opposed to God and his creative purpose. For Aulén, this poses no trivial philosophical or theological exercise; on the contrary, he sees the realities here discussed as those of the Scriptures and of mankind's common earthly experience.

Recognizing the integral connection between the God-image and the topic of atonement, Lindroth asserts: "Aulén's interpretation of Luther's view of the atonement is not to be understood apart from his delineation of Luther's God-concept as a background."³² Lindroth takes this a step further and intensifies his previous statement: "When Aulén sees the vital point in Luther's view of the atonement in the battle and victory motif, then the atonement thus viewed becomes an expression of the dualism, and of the tension-filled unity prerequisite in dualism, which characterizes Luther's God-concept, and his interpretation of Christianity in general."³³

Surveying Swedish theology, Edgar M. Carlson reviews both the works of Göransson and Aulén on the topic of Luther's God-image. Concerning Göransson's contribution, Carlson comments that Göransson "stresses both the unity of Luther's thought and the tensions that are essential to it."³⁴ Carlson finds the significance of Göransson's exposition "in the fact that he finds a unity which embraces the tensions instead of removing them"; likewise, Carlson

adds to this a comment on Aulén: "The most important synthesis is that of Aulén in Den kristna gudsbilden."³⁵

Carlson discusses the Swedish theological investigations of Luther's antitheses; he recognizes the religious unity they seek to express. Carlson speaks of the general tendency "toward simplification and concentration that characterizes the Swedish interpretation" in these terms:

All sin is reduced to unbelief. Flesh and spirit represent total views of man. Revelation, Incarnation, and Atonement are linked together and merged into one. Justification is a single ongoing act of God by which these are realized in man in the present moment. Ethics is concentrated in the single law of love, which is but another aspect of faith. All these move in the direction of unity.³⁶

Yet, he admits that there exists another side to all of this which "lays stress on the dualistic features of Luther's thought,"³⁷ a dualism that is "not merely another item in the Swedish view, but something that cuts through every aspect of it."³⁸

Referring specifically to Aulén's Den kristna gudsbilden, Carlson claims Aulén as an example of the Swedish theological pattern of Luther interpretation which "rests upon the possibility of resolving the dualism in the concept of God, without denying it."³⁹ He indicates that Aulén "presents an analysis of Luther's conception of God that achieves unity by emphasizing the tensions instead of removing them...Aulén calls it a 'dynamic synthesis'."⁴⁰ Carlson, much like Lindroth, proceeds to examine Aulén's

description of "five tensions in Luther's picture of God and shows how they are combined into a dynamic synthesis."⁴¹ To this consideration of Aulén's God-picture, Carlson adds the following judgment:

This is the dynamic synthesis which Aulén finds to be inherent in Luther's theology. It is admittedly an interpretative construct and, as such, is the product of Aulén's thought as well as of Luther's. It can, nevertheless, lay impressive claim to be an authentic presentation of the fundamental position which enables Luther to combine a wide range of religious motifs without consciousness of conflict between them.⁴²

Carlson's conclusion stresses that even though the presentation of the antitheses in Luther's God-picture is properly Aulén's "interpretative construct," nevertheless, it possesses lasting value as an attempt to come to grips with Luther's wide range of thoughts and expressions.

Considering Aulén's exposition of the antitheses in Luther's God-image, H. Lindroth explicitly refers to Aulén's methodology as "theological-factual" with a historical central focus which sets for itself the "task to clarify Luther's views with reference to their own religio-ethical context."⁴³ Lindroth specifically clarifies this point in distinction to another Swedish approach which seeks to examine Luther from a more determined psychological methodology.⁴⁴ He also adds to this his comments on Anders Nygren's work on atonement observing that much like Aulén, "he [Nygren] places Luther's concept of the atonement in a comprehensive historical systematic context."⁴⁵

In reviewing the Luther renewal in Sweden, Lindroth necessarily highlights Ragnar Bring's Dualismen hos Luther (1929), indicating that Bring has directly followed up the incitement offered by Aulén whose work confirms Söderblom's position: "A powerful dualism courses inexorably through Luther's life."⁴⁶ Lindroth refers to Aulén's own admission that "since the time, when I worked on Luther's God-concept, it appeared clear to me, that hardly any problem in Luther's theology would be more worthwhile to investigate, than the question regarding the dualism in Luther."⁴⁷

Along these same lines, Lindroth asserts that Bring has essentially adopted Aulén's method but enlarges upon it especially in regard to Luther's contrasts, "conceptions set up as opposites," such as flesh/spirit, sin/grace, law/Gospel, faith/unbelief, new man/old, righteousness/sin, God/devil.⁴⁸ Bring also examines the dualistic background of Luther's atonement and comes to the conclusion that the dualism is not incidental to Luther's viewpoint but holds a central place therein.⁴⁹ Lindroth summarizes Bring's contribution to the Swedish Luther renaissance: "The abiding result of Bring's investigation could be formulated thus, that in general it is impossible to understand Luther's views apart from the dualistic fundamental view."⁵⁰

Lindroth likewise treats of his own study of Luther's atonement concept, "The Atonement - a Dogmhistorical and Systematic Investigation," in which he offers a comparison of Luther and Anselm: "for the purpose of bringing out, in

the sharpest possible relief, the evangelical uniqueness of Luther's conception of the atonement in contrast with the typically Roman Catholic conception of Anselm."⁵¹ He underlines the point that "within Protestant theology Anselm's theory of the atonement has played a very peculiar role, in that at times thoughts have been presented as Anselmian which have had nothing to do with Anselm himself. Long enough has Luther's concept of atonement been placed in the same line with the Anselmic satisfaction theory."⁵²

Lindroth's review of the Swedish Luther revival identifies those characteristic qualities of Swedish theology that find a place in Aulén's soteriology. Aulén is heir to the Swedish Luther heritage; but more than that, he himself stands as a vital force within this theological movement. Aulén's Luther interpretation and its relevance to the Christus Victor theme can be appreciated properly only in light of this twentieth century Luther renaissance in Sweden. As explained by authors like Hjalmar Lindroth, these general trends pave the way for a fuller understanding of Luther's ideas concerning God who accomplishes atonement through the victorious Christ.

Another survey of Aulén's reflection on the God-image and its relationship to atonement is provided by Nels F.S. Ferré in his overview of Swedish theology, Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology. Ferré recognizes the vital importance of the Luther renewal for these Swedish theologians. He connects these developments to the revival

which stemmed from Albrecht Ritschl's studies; and he sees the Swedish Luther movement as both based upon and yet opposed to Ritschl's historical emphasis.⁵³ Concerning Aulén's thought, Ferré reflects that "Gustaf Aulén, whose imprint on Lundensian theology is in certain aspects the heaviest, likes to think of the movement as the rediscovery of Luther."⁵⁴

Referring specifically to Aulén's work on the God-image, rooted in his Luther understanding, and comparing it to Nygren's efforts in the direction of a basic religious motif, Ferré indicates the limitations inherent in such theological endeavors:

All the theologians of the Lundensian school further stress the idea that the basic motifs are only approximations and may even be a fundamental attitude or general notion rather than a clearly defined thought. Aulén, for this very reason, refuses to speak in terms of the "concept" of God, but speaks instead of the "picture" of God.⁵⁵

The author makes clear that Aulén's picture of God is not an abstraction but comes from its essential link to what God has revealed in Jesus as Savior; it is "the center of Christian faith as the picture of God received from his redemptive work in Christ."⁵⁶

Ferré analyzes Aulén's presentation in Den kristna gudsbilden with special reference to Luther and the Reformation. The Reformation here is viewed as a return to the classical atonement motif. Similarly, Ferré underlines Luther's significant position, contending that when Luther "gave forceful expression to the dualistic-dramatic

revelation of God's agape, he broke mightily with all the formal limitations which Latin thought had placed on God, whether Anselm's nihil rationabilius or scholasticism's potentia ordinata. Luther's gospel was the first liberty in God's agape contra legem and contra rationem."⁵⁷ He also repeats Aulén's notion that Lutheran Orthodoxy failed in maintaining the insights of Luther especially with regard to mankind's salvation as unconditionally and entirely based upon God's love.⁵⁸

Ferré's work also examines Aulén's idea of religious faith as a "dynamic synthesis."⁵⁹ This bears direct relevance to the antitheses and contrasts in Luther's presentation of God and the atonement. He condenses Aulén's attitude in the succinct statement: "Faith knows nothing outside the tension contained in the paradox of the Christ-deed."⁶⁰ These notions of a "paradox," of a "religious tension," and of a "dynamic synthesis" appear all the more important when one begins to analyze Aulén's presentation of atonement.

Much of Gustaf Aulén's original Olaus Petri lectures, as well as the subsequent development of the Christus Victor theme, is linked essentially to Aulén's understanding of Luther. The Swedish Luther renaissance, in which Aulén played a significant role, forms the background against which Aulén's own exposition develops. Critical appraisals of Aulén's theological presentation must look in that direction and likewise at how Aulén applies his Luther

understanding to the specific questions concerned with atonement. Both Aulén's defenders and his critics have evaluated Aulén's use of Luther in this context. These critiques serve to elucidate further Aulén's notion of atonement through conflict and victory.

D. Aulén's Luther Presentation: Concurrence and Criticism

Aulén's employment of Luther's theological concepts concerning God and mankind's salvation has given rise to various commentaries by theologians, some supportive and others critical. Very often the same concurring opinions as well as quite similar dissenting notions surface. In order to understand better Aulén's Luther exposition, there is value in sampling such comments in several major works that review Swedish soteriological thought.

Philip S. Watson in his study, Let God Be God, discusses favorably Aulén's classical view.⁶¹ Watson examines Aulén's contention concerning Luther's portrayal of Christ as struggling against the five tyrannical powers: sin, death, the devil, the law and God's wrath. Consistent with Aulén's delineation of the classical atonement view, Luther holds that Christ's victory is achieved by his Incarnation, cross and resurrection taken as a whole.

In this survey, Watson underlines the significant importance of the integral relationship between Christ's saving work and Luther's concept of justification. Watson

asserts: "Luther's conception of the work of Christ has fundamentally the same significance as his doctrine of justification. He speaks of the two in the same breath and in identical terms. Both are opposed to anthropocentricity in religion, and especially to its expression in religious legalism."⁶² Watson's statement enables the observer to understand why and how Aulén can affirm with such intensity that Christ's redemptive victory is at the heart of Luther's thinking: redemption and justification are intrinsically related, and salvation must not be centered on man's effort in a legalistic framework. Aulén's critique of Anselm and the Latin type of atonement concerns itself with the latter point; whereas, the former assertion regarding redemption and justification is directly related to the problems involved in interpreting Luther.

Watson also discusses the observations of Sydney Cave who criticizes Aulén's presentation as one-sided, since Luther "taught not only the Patristic view, but also the penal theory of the atonement, or at least gave interpretations of Christ's work of which the penal theory is a rationalization."⁶³ The author adds: "An older interpreter of Luther, Theodosius Harnack, might seem to lend support to this view, when he maintains that Luther's chief emphasis falls not primarily on Christ's conflict with the powers of evil, but on his relation to the law, not on redemption, but on atonement."⁶⁴ In brief, Watson's presentation highlights two noteworthy considerations: the

penal aspect of Luther's redemption notion and the law relationship. Aulén's atonement idea disputes the first point; likewise his view presents its own unique theory of law, as both overcome and fulfilled, without disruption of the essential unity between redemption and atonement.

Watson explains Luther's concept of the law both as serving God's purpose and as being one of the oppressive factors mankind must face because of sin.⁶⁵ In Christus Victor Aulén also demonstrates Luther's two-fold view of the law: "It is good, as an expression of God's will and commandment; yet it is also a 'tyrant' for it provokes to sin and increases sin."⁶⁶ Outlining the dramatic atonement type, Aulén handles this problematic without detriment to salvation as a unified act of God's saving, loving will by utilizing "dualistic" and "double-aspect" terminology. Aulén's methodology has a distinct advantage in this case over the other atonement categories.

Watson denies emphatically that Luther supported a penal theory, on the premise that "if the charge could be substantiated, it would reveal a profound and irreconcilable contradiction in Luther's thought."⁶⁷ He states:

In other words, the penal theory implies a fundamentally legalistic conception of God's character and of his dealings with men. But is it possible that Luther, who is otherwise so implacable an opponent of legalism, could have failed to perceive this fact?⁶⁸

Watson understands that the contention concerning a penal theory is rooted in the particular terminology Luther employs. The author then proceeds to discuss three

important terms: satisfaction, merit, sacrifice; Aulén does precisely the same thing in his Luther chapter in Christus Victor. Watson expresses what appears to be a major judgment on this problem which he shares with Aulén:

"Luther makes use of current terms such as satisfaction, merit, and sacrifice, in order to convey a meaning precisely contrary to that commonly accepted among his opponents."⁶⁹

Throughout his treatment of these subjects, Watson contends that Luther accepts these terms only on the basis of their theocentricity.⁷⁰ Concerning satisfaction, Watson asserts that Luther excludes an anthropocentric idea:

"...if we are to speak of satisfaction for sin at all, it must have reference, not to the work of sinful men, but of Christ, who is divine. It is certainly not to Christ as man (qua homo), representing men, that Luther points us here."⁷¹

In regard to merits, Watson declares that Luther is opposed to any concept of human merits sufficient for mankind's redemption and reconciliation with God;⁷² the "merit" or

"merits" are centered in God's graciousness and saving mercy. Commenting upon Luther, Watson insists that "the merit of Christ is thus virtually equivalent to that justifying righteousness of God (justitia qua justificat nos), which is Christ himself, and which is given to us."⁷³

Likewise, the notion of sacrifice must be freed absolutely from any confusion concerning the theocentricity of mankind's salvation: "For men to offer sacrifices in the hope of placating and propitiating God, is in Luther's eyes

a mark of false religion and idolatry; and he therefore sets the sacrifice of Christ in absolute opposition to all sacrifices offered by men."⁷⁴

Watson's exposition concerning Luther's approach to satisfaction, merits, and the theological concept of sacrifice parallels the latter section of Aulén's Luther exposé in the published Christus Victor. While Watson strives to accentuate Luther's theocentricity in this context, Aulén's treatment poses a more detailed contrast with the Latin atonement type.⁷⁵ Both Aulén's and Watson's presentations emphasize the point that Luther utilizes the Latin type terminology by giving these words "a new sense."⁷⁶ Aulén adds a novel twist in speaking of sacrifice: it is truly God's sacrifice and not man's, but "Luther's chief interest is to show how much the atoning work (if the phrase may be allowed) costs God."⁷⁷ The implication which stands out here confirms once again Aulén's insistence that in an authentic comprehension of Christian soteriology, God must be seen as actively engaged in the salvific process; God is not only the object but the subject of redemption: "It is the essential double-sidedness of the classic idea - namely, that God is at once the Reconciler and the Reconciled...."⁷⁸ Aulén claims that the Latin type of atonement with its stress on the need to satisfy from the side of mankind an order of the universe - albeit an order divinely decreed - misses the mark of God's active and direct involvement in salvation,

whereas in Luther's thinking, "it is exhibited in a new and intense light."⁷⁹

Essentially agreeing with Aulén's interpretation, Watson indicates three main points relevant to Aulén's Luther analysis:

- 1) "...Luther very often speaks of Christ's satisfaction, merit, sacrifice, and pacification of God's wrath in the same context and virtually in the same breath as he speaks of the conflict and victory over the tyrants..."⁸⁰
- 2) "One thing Luther is not trying to do...is to elaborate a dogmatic theory of the atonement";⁸¹
- 3) "...Luther's own characteristic point of view finds its clearest and most consistent expression in the thought of Christ's conflict and victory. He actually defines the proper office of Christ in these terms....This conception Luther describes as capitalia nostrae theologiae...."⁸²

Hence, Watson affirms that Luther places his description and terms side by side; he does not attempt a dogmatic theory. Luther, however, does consider this portrayal of Christ's work as vital to the Christian faith. Watson's survey concurs with Aulén's and fits the criteria Aulén establishes for his Luther interpretation. Reviewing this thinking, one

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cannot overlook Watson's essential affirmation, a point which substantially coheres with Aulén's own Luther exposition: the thoroughly theocentric viewpoint - salvation is God's work and his alone.

Aulén's treatment of Christ's salvific action in The Drama and the Symbols discusses Christ's accomplishment from the standpoint of Jesus' obedience to God and his solidarity with sinful mankind.⁸³ In examining Luther, Watson supplements Aulén's thinking in this matter by focusing attention in three areas: 1) Christ became subject to the same forces of tyranny under which men suffer; 2) Christ has done so freely and voluntarily; 3) Christ has achieved his victory stricto jure, by unquestionable right, not by force or fraud even in regard to the devil.⁸⁴ Watson's Luther interpretation also emphasizes the unity of the divine work as well as its unswerving theocentricity: "This is the heart of his theologia crucis, where Incarnation and Atonement, Redemption and Revelation are all one, and all are God's own work."⁸⁵ In all these points, a fundamental agreement with Gustaf Aulén is evident.

Edgar M. Carlson's well-known review of Swedish theology, The Reinterpretation of Luther, likewise concurs favorably with Aulén's Luther interpretation regarding the classic view of atonement. Carlson's study outlines four main characteristics of Aulén's dramatic soteriology which illustrate the differences Aulén exposes in the various atonement theories: a) the importance of God as the

subject of atonement; b) the fact that the classic type considers sin and salvation in personal rather than in juridical or moralistic terms; c) the "much more intrinsic" role for the Incarnation in the classic view; and d) the important distinction in "the conception of God that lies behind each of these views."⁸⁶ Carlson considers these characteristics of Aulén's proposition as necessarily linked to the latter's understanding of Luther.

Carlson admits that not all Swedish interpretation of Luther corresponds with Aulén's assessment of Luther's atonement thinking. He suggests that Swedish Luther research contains both a "majority" and "minority" position; nevertheless, the "majority report" concurs essentially with Aulén's ideas.⁸⁷ However, in evaluating both sides of this issue, Carlson agrees with Aulén over "the terms and ideas Luther uses in describing the atoning work of Christ; and the way in which they cohere with his total teaching."⁸⁸ He concedes that Luther uses terms such as "satisfaction," "sacrifice" and "merit"; nevertheless, Aulén's interpretation rests heavily on the manner in which Luther employs them. Carlson claims that for Aulén and for such theologians as Ragnar Bring, Luther gives these terms "an entirely theocentric emphasis which changes them fundamentally."⁸⁹ An important factor for Aulén's preference of the dramatic atonement idea over the satisfaction structure of the Latin type of atonement stands

out clearly: the theocentricity which is the nucleus of man's redemption.

Along these same lines, Carlson describes Hjalmar Lindroth's argument concerning Anselm's "aut satisfactio aut poena" as expressed in Lindroth's Försoningen (1935):

"While Anselm regards punishment as an impossible choice, Luther identifies Christ's satisfaction with bearing the penalty which man's sin deserved."⁹⁰ Here Carlson mentions

certain features of Anselm's presentation which markedly differentiate it from Aulén's ideas. In Anselm, there exists a clear emphasis on death as constituting the necessary satisfaction; and the motivation for this is not God's wrath or displeasure, but retributive justice.⁹¹

According to Carlson, Lindroth insists that Anselm observes a strict dichotomy between punishment and satisfaction; it is a case of one or the other. On the contrary, "Luther breaks through the alternative...on which Anselm's system is built" by identifying "Christ's satisfaction with bearing the penalty which man's sin deserved."⁹² Lindroth's thinking also stresses the Anselmian concept of meritorious value in Christ's dying. This concept of merit, over and above what is needed, as applicable to sinful mankind is a hallmark feature of Anselm's salvation structure. Obviously for Aulén's Christus Victor idea, Luther's conviction is preferable to that of the Latin type.

Carlson exposes other characteristic properties of Swedish Luther interpretation that cohere with Aulén's

soteriological presentation. He delineates Luther's view of the law and states that "all the tyrants may be regarded as synonyms for the law. The devil and hell can threaten with death because they can point to the law in support of their threat."⁹³ This recalls Aulén's insistence on the law as one of the oppressive forces hostile to mankind. Citing Lindroth, Carlson continues to illustrate the differences between Luther and Anselm in this matter. He observes that "for Anselm, it is the judging and recompensing righteousness of God, as expressed in the law, that constitutes the inviolable character of the divine order, and demands satisfaction in the interests of justice," whereas "for Luther, God and righteousness so conceived are a tyranny which must be overcome."⁹⁴ Luther turns away from any sterile, external legalism to a personalistic dimension involving God and fallen mankind. Carlson relates this Swedish Luther assessment to Aulén's idea of a victory over the law as a tyrant, declaring that Christus Victor has both fulfilled and overcome the law. The duality and paradoxical nature of the classic atonement view stand out here in full relief:

Bring and Lindroth have made valuable additions to Aulén's presentation of Luther's atonement theory by clarifying Christ's victory over the law. Their interpretation may be briefly stated thus: Christ confronted the law with a righteousness so perfect that the law condemned it. He sharpened it, or heightened it, to the point where it becomes evident that God alone can offer the righteousness that it requires. It is a gift of God. The atonement is, therefore, both the fulfillment⁹⁵ of the law and the destruction of the law.

In addition Carlson comments that "Christ can claim to be the Victor over the law, both in the sense that he exposes the unrighteousness of the law which condemned him and in the sense that he reveals a righteousness so much higher than that of the law that only God can be its author. In both ways he robs it of its tyrannical power."⁹⁶ Pointing specifically to Aulén, Carlson remarks that "this victory of Christ over law is the most pointed of all expressions of Luther's opposition to the moralism of Latin Christianity."⁹⁷

Aulén recognizes the importance of Luther's attitude toward the law for the dramatic notion of atonement. He highlights Luther's methodology in regard to law's place contending that "the law is at once good and evil; from one point of view, altogether good; from another, altogether evil. It is good as an expression of God's will and commandment; yet it is also a 'tyrant,' for it provokes to sin and increases sin."⁹⁸ Aulén demonstrates how Luther handles this two-fold understanding of the law and its function with its consequent results for soteriology: "The nerve of the whole is the idea of the divine love breaking into pieces the order of merit and justice, and creating a new order to govern the relation of man with God, that of grace."⁹⁹

Moving in this same direction, Carlson describes another aspect of the tyranny opposing mankind which is a unique expression of Swedish Luther interpretation and which

fits Aulén's exposition, the idea of God's wrath.¹⁰⁰ The significance of this concept is succinctly disclosed in Christus Victor:

The importance of this point for the discussion of the atonement is that in Luther the wrath of God takes the place of the retributive justice (justitia distributiva) of the medieval scheme. It is typical that Luther should prefer the personal term to the chilly juridical term; evidently he is determined to show that God is intensely active and personally engaged in judging sinful man and maintaining the order of grace which he has established. The wrath of God is the expressive phrase that shows God's will in its immediate and direct reaction to man's sin.¹⁰¹

Carlson observes that Aulén's explanation exhibits "the intensely personal way in which Luther conceives of God's relationship to men."¹⁰² Juridicism and legalism diminish with such an exposition of Luther.

Carlson's commentary on Aulén's discussion of wrath reveals the limit to which this Luther concept is pushed: "...the dualistic conflict is moved back into the very nature of God. It is not only a struggle between God and the devil; it is a struggle within God himself."¹⁰³ In Christus Victor Aulén plainly states: "At this point the idea of God's own conflict and victory is brought by Luther to a paradoxical sharpness beyond anything that we have hitherto met; it would seem almost as if the conflict were carried back within the divine being itself."¹⁰⁴

Aulén accentuates Luther's antinomy, the conflict between "the divine curse, the wrath, and the divine blessing, the love."¹⁰⁵ He points out the contrast between

Luther's approach to this antinomy and that of the Latin atonement type:

- a) "for the Latin theory, the satisfaction made by Christ is primarily a rationally conceived compromise between the demand for punishment and the remission of punishment..."
- b) "the demand of God's justice is satisfied by the compensation paid by Christ from man's side, from below..."
- c) "in Luther every trace of this rationalism has disappeared; it disappears because the dualistic outlook is maintained, and because the victory over the curse and the wrath is in the fullest sense God's victory..."
- d) "It is God's act of victory, when Christ goes in under the divine wrath, and bears the burden of the punishment which on account of that wrath impends upon men."¹⁰⁶

Aulén insists that in the final analysis God's displeasure is overcome by the divine love which is die Natur Gottes; wrath is subdued since "through the atonement it is aufgehoben, transcended...that is, it remains latent in and behind the divine love, and forms the background of the work which the love fulfills."¹⁰⁷

Considering Luther's belief regarding God's wrath, several determinative characteristics of Aulén's classic

view emerge: rational compromise is excluded; no compensation from man's side is acceptable; some type of dualistic outlook appears necessary; Christ bears the burden of the punishment which falls upon sinful mankind; a paradoxical view of the functioning of God's love with its essential opposition to all evil remains central. Carlson adds the cautionary note that God's wrath is not "unreal or illusory."¹⁰⁸ Aulén remains aware of this same point: "the fact that the wrath is overcome means not at all that it is to be regarded as only a pretended wrath, or that it ceases to exist...."¹⁰⁹ In every sense, God's wrath must be seen as a functional aspect of God's ever-creating love: God is "constantly overcoming his wrath by bringing man into actual fellowship with himself."¹¹⁰ Luther's attitude toward the law and the divine wrath, as both serving God's purpose and as opponents of sinful humanity, holds a significant place in Aulén's presentation of the classic atonement view.

In his rather favorable review of Aulén's soteriology, Carlson also discusses one of the criteria Aulén selects as decisive, the "way in which this interpretation of the atonement coheres with the total pattern of Luther's thought."¹¹¹ Along with Aulén, Carlson examines Luther's reaction to penances and other forms of religious satisfactions which exalt human effort and compromise the theocentricity of God's saving work.¹¹² Carlson further indicates that Luther considers the Incarnation as an "intrinsic part of the atonement itself," while in "the

Latin theory, the Incarnation is merely a necessary preliminary step."¹¹³ This statement parallels Aulén's own assertion. In regard to Christ's death and resurrection, Carlson details another noteworthy difference found in Luther: "For Anselm, the satisfaction is completed in the death of Christ. For Luther, the resurrection and the crucifixion are equally important."¹¹⁴

Delineating this general coherence of the classic view with Swedish Luther interpretation, Carlson stresses emphatically the link with Luther's concept of justification. It is here that an integral relationship between mankind's struggle and the victory of Christ incarnate stands out decisively. One notices also the unity in Luther's ideas between faith and the forgiveness of man's sin:

Luther is regarded as a genuine exponent of the classic type....The tyrants that Christ faced when he became man, he still faces when he comes to man. Justification is the continuation in the believer of the same struggle and the accomplishment of the same victory. Just as in the Incarnation Christ came into man's situation and conquered, so in faith he constantly comes to man and overcomes the tyrants for him and in him. He breaks the tyranny of the law by entering into fellowship with man on the basis of forgiveness.¹¹⁵

Carlson's statement ("Justification is the continuation in the believer of the same struggle and the accomplishment of the same victory.") demonstrates that in Aulén's dramatic atonement type, Christ's conflict and victory provide the basis for humanity's hope and for an ecclesiology founded in this victory. In this sense Christ's saving work appears